

Tribhuvan University

Anti materialistic journey in Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*

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Shraddha Guragin

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "Anti-materialistic journey in Jon Kraukauer's *Into the Wild*" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Shradha Guragain has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee:

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Toya Nath Upadhya  
Supervisor

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External Supervisor

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Pradip Sharma  
Head of the  
Department of English

Date: .....

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled, "Anti-materialistic Journey in Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*" is my own original work carried out as a master's student at the department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis/research/term paper's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis paper have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.

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Shradda Guragain

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Shraddha Guragain

## **Abstract**

This research Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer attempts to show a reaction against materialism through a vivid portrayal of experiences of a teenager, Christopher Johnson McCandless. It is an attempt to show how he leaves his wealthy life behind, goes into the wilderness and ends up there. he gives up his life in quest of spirituality through wilderness. he makes his journey not easier but more difficult which begins with a very minimal material possession. Leaving everything behind, his wealth, his family and friends, he disappears into the unknown wilderness. The real issue that this research intends to answer is what are the reasons that push a young fellow far from family, companions and so called high class society and pick wilderness? The primary purpose of this exploration is not to scrutinize the consequences of McCandless's life and choices he makes but to investigate why McCandless pick wilderness as an escape from American standard society and if he can discover the feeling of having peace and self-delight. Despite the fact that he is from apparently well-off family and accomplished as well, he leaves all those just to wander into the wilderness and tries to make his life meaningful. To McCandless everything in nature is to a great degree valuable, might be even sacred.

The quest of happiness and satisfaction runs throughout this novel. The research discovers his voyage to edify himself through isolation and contact of nature. The principle character deserts everything and looks for nature with the goal that he can discover the feeling of self-gratification.

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## **Introduction: McCandless, Travel and Materialism**

This research spins around the real story of Christopher Jonson McCandless who travels into the wild in search of self-gratification but is found dead inside a transport in the Alaskan hedge. The story revolves around how he ends up there. This research also aims to examine the issue of finding inner-self. The main character tries to find his way for self-discovery. He forsakes materialist achievements in life, leaves his family and everything behind and vanishes. He seeks nature so that he can find the true meaning of his life. With the very basic material possession, he starts his journey and tries to discover his approach to find himself. With those limited material belongings, which are insufficient for one to survive, make his journey more enjoyable. He gives away his yellow Datsun (car) and all the measures of cash he has. He also gives all his savings to a charity and burns the rest of the cash and goes into the wild in search of new Christopher Johnson McCandless who wants his life to be not easier but more difficult and adventurous. He opposes materialistic advancements and favors wilderness in hope of acquiring spirituality.

Jon Krakauer collects numerous sources both essential and optional to portray the undertakings of Chris McCandless to write *Into the Wild*. It is the real story of Chris McCandless. McCandless, a young Emory graduate, who is found dead in the Alaskan wilderness in September 1992 at the age of twenty four. He comes from a very wealthy family from Washington D.C. he is very good athlete and a scholar too, who from a very early age grows deep intensity and passion. After graduating from high school, McCandless goes on a road trip, alone across the country. While on the trip, he discovers that his father secretly has second family. He returns home from his trip and starts as a freshman at Emory. But the sense of betrayal makes his anger grow even worse over a time. After that he barely keeps in touch with his parents. He lets

his parents think that he is interested in law school, but instead, he donates his twenty five thousand dollars, his savings, to a charity, after graduating with honors. After donating all his savings to a charity, he gets in his car and drives away without telling anyone where he is going. He also abandons his real name all the way. He never contacts his parents or sister. After leaving Atlanta, McCandless leaves his car in the desert, and from then, he hitchhikes around the North West. He even gets jobs but does not stay anywhere for long. Though he gets jobs he still lives on the streets and also keeps just little money and very little possessions. During this time, he gets to know few people very closely. Each and every person who knows him closely, on his way, each of them admires his will to live completely by his beliefs.

After two long years of vagrant travel, McCandless settles on an arrangement to go to Alaska and genuinely live into the wild, totally alone, and with no many supplies, to see whether he can do it, to drive himself to the simple extremes. He spends a couple of months getting ready, adapting whatever he can, learning all about hunting, edible plants and so on and leaves South Dakota, where he had been working and hitchhikes to Fairbanks. Those whom he tells about his plan, all warn him that he needs to be better prepared and well-arranged or should hold up until some other time in spring, but he is resolved and stubborn. He communicates his idea to his friend Ron Franz, as he persuades him to be more dynamic and audacious with his life. He neither simplifies that one needs no human connections to be happy, one does not require anything of human starting point.

In April 1992 McCandless gets dropped off close to mount McKinley, and climbs into the wild. He spends the following four months hunting small games, searching, reading and living in a left transport, which is deserted and moreover made to be a shelter for hunters. He lives there without seeing a single human, the entire



time. He is successful, generally, despite the fact that he loses significant weight. In late July, however, McCandless eats some poison that basically makes him starve to death. He is immediately weakened by the toxin. Acknowledging he will die, he composes a farewell message and a few weeks later some hunters find his body in the bus.

Krakauer endeavors to shed all human relationship and materialistic achievements. He tries to confer himself to something supreme that he hopes to find in wilderness. He seeks to commit himself to life or truth or beauty rather than man-made principles. He knows that material wealth is nothing but just dirt of hand. That's why he leaves everything behind and goes into the wilderness to find his inner-self. He struggles to survive in the Alaskan wilderness and the narrator attempts to piece together his motivations that he at least lives his life as per his own principles. He lives like there is no tomorrow. In that short span of time, he lives happily without being judged by the society. He finds his real place. He finds out that he belongs to the rural areas where he can spend his time with nature not in the urban society where he is judged time and again by the so called social people. McCandless accepts strongly that the majority of society's titles and inspirations serve just to isolate everyone from the true beauty and joy in the world that comes from nature. If somehow we manage to cut ourselves off from these absolutely human manifestation and quit agonizing over things that really don't make any difference, the world would be substantially a more happier and joyful place.

The 90's USA was in the path of rapid economic growth. Capitalism was the main fundamentals of country's economy. The term "American Dream" was prevalent. McCandless was simply one more young man, who anybody would hope to be a little piece of that enormous American dream. He was resolved to break his chain

and carry on with his life in the wild. His childhood has a lot to do with why he gets away from the society and picks nature. The main reason behind why McCandless went out into the wild was to get away from the limits that advance society had set upon him. Instead of fitting in the commonly accepted road to success that is through money, social standing and so on, he chooses to do things on his own particular manner and locate his own particular bliss out of general surroundings.

All these scenarios make me raise some questions such as why does a wealthy young man wanders into the wilderness alone? Though he is from urban society, why he could not cope with the people of that society? What makes him leave everything behind and start a new journey into the wilderness? Is it for self-gratification? The researcher makes use of the travel writing theory. In the same way, internet, library, reviews and advice of supervisor's guidance too are used in the process of this very research.

Jon Krakauer presents the real life story of Christopher Johnson McCandless. One could state that he has romanticized the composition and belief systems of nature devotee essayists, for example, Jack London and Henry David Thoreau. Certain similarities between Thoreauvian ideals and those of McCandless are apparent in *Walden* and *Into the Wild*. For one, McCandless's intended goal for his cross country trek was to invent an utterly new life for himself, one in which he would be free to experience unfiltered and spiritual experiences. Likewise Thoreau also talks about his spiritually-driven experiences in nature, which he presents in *Walden*. Both of them not only exhibited intellectual curiosity concerning the meaningful components of life, but they also acted upon the principle of discovering their individual notions of the spirit of life. Thoreau's decision to move to the isolation of the woods surrounding Walden Pond was an attempt to live practically. Through this practicality and faithful

adherence to a simple, methodical way of life, it is clear that Thoreau retreats to the woods in a self-conscious effort to discover his own truths, the truths that will provide spiritual and intellectual coherence within his being. He does not live in isolation to mean he has discovered the only way to live purely but rather he goes to Walden Pond in order to more clearly understand what life means to him on a very personal level. Likewise McCandless also goes into the wilderness to understand his own life.

McCandless is often considered to be a controversial character. After the world came to know how his life came to an end, there is a clear division of opinions. Some consider McCandless as an idol and support his decision to choose nature and pay sympathy to his death in Alaskan Wilderness. But McCandless is also ridiculed for his stupidity. Many argue he was just an immature hiker who wanted to prove his strength but lacked proper planning, enthusiasm and passion to be a smart and matured hiker. Addressing some of the bizarre aspects of this travel writing, Michael Branch makes following observation:

*Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer narrates the story of Chris McCandless, a twenty four year old from the suburbs of Washington D.C. We all know people who to some degree choose wilderness and make material sacrifices. But not so many of those give away twenty four thousands to a charity, abandon their cars and burn all the cash in their wallet. These details sound crazed out of context, but in Krakauer's view they are the acts of high minded-idealists. (n.pag.)

McCandless's task is made difficult by himself deliberately. We may know some people who may choose wilderness and sacrifice the material possessions but not every of them give their savings to a charity and burn all the cash in their wallet. We cannot forsake our prosperous life and vanish into the wilderness just like

McCandless did. All the details about McCandless sounds out of context but Krakauer thinks those are the acts of high-minded people. Peter Bradshaw makes following observations and states:

Romantic, but he is also stubborn, driven and selfish. His need to immerse himself in nature, to throw material possessions overboard, stems at least partly from a need to punish his parents for the lies and cruelties; he remembers being inflicted on him and his sister as a child. There is something regressive and dysfunctional in McCandless, a fear of human interaction. (n.pag.)

Peter Bradshaw shows McCandless as a stubborn and selfish. He wants to punish his parents. They are the reason behind his and his sister both had a terrible childhood. He wants to punish them for all the lies they lied and their cruelties towards McCandless and his sister. McCandless also fear human interaction. He gets afraid to be close with people around him.

He sees negative effects money has on people in society and never wants to be like that. McCandless is to a great degree against the estimation of articles like cash and wealth. He never trusts that any of the material possessions make a difference to be genuinely happy. He affronts when anybody attempts to hand him things as endowments. He thinks everybody depends on physical articles to make them glad and detested it since it is a hopeless approach to live.

Jon Krakauer is an American writer and a mountaineer, primarily known for his writings about the outdoors, especially mountain climbing. Krakauer was born in Brookline, Massachusetts. His father introduced the young Krakauer to mountaineering at the age of eight.

## **Travel Writing, Nature and Spirituality**

Travel writing is an increasingly popular genre in the present era. Travel writing is a broad term that includes writings about travel of people from different backgrounds. Travel writing is currently flourishing and highly popular literary genre. Every year a stream of new travelogues flows from the printing press. However, travel writing also has academic defenders. Mark Coker explains that "travel is one of the greatest doors to human freedom and the travel book is medium through which human celebrate this freedom". Travel writing has pulled in a wide readership since ancient times. Travel writing is currently a dynamic and socially important genre. This is one of the unique forms of non-fiction. It has its root of origins in classical Greece. It includes journals, diaries, memoirs and logs as well as narratives of exploration, adventure and escape.

Travel and travel writing has been ancient human phenomena. Humans travelled from one place to another and told their stories to others. After, writing began; travel experiences got recorded in writing. Travel was done for various purposes such as for settlement or for conquest, or for trade or for achieving knowledge and pleasure. Travel was an interesting activity from the very beginning of human lives. Classical and mythical writings of the world have included travel as the central theme; for example *Mahabharata* describes the journey of the Pandavas; *Ramayana* of Ram, Laxman and Sita; Homer's *Odyssey* of Odysus; Virgil's *Aeneid* of Aenus.

Traveling brings out even the most modest parts of life that one appreciates without bounds. Diminish Whitefield claims that the most extreme joy from investigation to the awesome unwinding of brain, takes individuals on otherworldly voyage without anyone else, which is exemplary. Travelling is much past the social

demonstration; it modifies oneself through petition and joy. It presents other worldliness on the traveler. Whitefield notes:

Now, however, it becomes perhaps the principle aim of the travel writer to convey the strangeness, exhilaration, fear or loneliness that may wait in alien landscapes. Yet physically was seen as the gateway to something else, for in this sense travel writing attempts to articulate, something that goes beyond the curiosity, the description, the knowledge-gathering and the humor of travel writing in earlier centuries. (244)

Each movement composition has a reason. It should be instructive on a general viewpoint. Traveling is dependably a mirror that will be reflected in composing by the creator. It is a development that will be passed by the author. Travel proposes the opening of different universe of being; universe which the author endeavors to express, something that goes past the intrigue, the information assembling in prior quite a long while. Travel improves other worldliness to the explorer who is experiencing fear or sorrow and dread or pity. Travelling unites the aggregate trip, from misery to bliss. It takes individuals back to their identity from what they have experienced. The purpose and modes of travel keep changing along with the time. In the ancient times, people travelled on foot for food, for safety, for trade etc. Now they travel on various means of transportation for various purposes. Whatever the purpose, there is always transformation of the self and knowledge of the traveler. A traveler returns a changed person after the encounter with new people, culture and geography.

Tim Youngs views, "transformation is often the aim of the quest in travel" (93). A traveler gets transformed from the previous position into new. Peter

Whitefield clarifies this as, "the experiences of transition and transformation [have] been associated with travelling. . . Traveling was associated with suffering which had the power to transform the lives of those who survived it" (1-2). Transformation is the main purpose of travel since long.

In the ancient times and in the medieval as well, people often traveled to nature for acquiring wisdom and spirituality. The Rishis, saints and so on sought wisdom from nature. Nature was means of knowledge and wisdom was respected greatly. But beginning from the early modern period, nature became the means of exploitation for human beings. The western colonizers looked to exploit nature for their profit. Although some people like romanticists praised nature, the exploitation of nature did not stop. Since industrialization, the pace of exploitation of nature went higher. The west got materialistic success through the use of natural resources but it could not get peace in the heart. With a sense of competition in becoming the super power of the world, the west lost the feeling of humanity. Great wars took place. Consequently, the west now has realized that there is still a sense of humanity in nature and in the non-western cultures. Thus the western travelers attempt to learn from the non-western people, their cultures and unspoiled nature. As Tim Youngs writes, the west hopes to find "an essential self that has buried and distorted by the weight of the post-industrial, mechanized world. Before other 'races' had generally been reviled; now they are embraced as offering a purer and more natural existence from which the modern world could learn" (97). Youngs comments that the West embraces the non-west, which it used to hate in the past, for its purer and natural existence.

Peter Whitefield argues that the West can learn from the non-west. He writes, "The time was ripe for western traveler to explore the world in a new spirit of

openness, ready to learn from other cultures, or alien environments" (282). He says the West intend to escape from the western world into the non-west. He writes, "the theme of the escape is striking, the desire to return to something elemental, noble, primitive or pagan, suggesting a flight from civilization and its discontents. There is distinct sense that western society has taken a wrong turning, and that by looking at the other cultures we may regain what we have lost" (282-283). Whitefield advises the West to learn from the cultures of the non-west;

In the present post-industrial age, the western travelers have turned to nature to find spirituality. They escape materialistic world into nature to understand the truth of being. Whitefield writes, ". . . nature offers unsecured signs of being" (281). From nature, human beings can learn what human spirituality is. Whitefield further writes, after the 1970s "a new generation of writers had marked out a territory that brought together travel, nature-awareness, anti-industrialism and landscape poetry, forging what amounted to a new genre of environmental literature"(279). Whitefield focuses on the environmental issues which travel writing also embraces.

Travel writing has a long connection with nature writing. Casey Blanton exposes this fact as, "Nature writing and travel writing, then, have never been strangers" (72). Since ancient times to the present, nature has been one of the main destinations of travelers who want to be in nature in order to understand the truth of being or spirituality. They detest materialistic achievement in that it brings no more than frustrations, uncertainties and terror.

The present study aims at finding out how the protagonist, McCandless, of *Into the wild* detests and abandons materialistic achievements and goes into the nature for communion with it. He follows the transcendental traditions of the American intellectual such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.



## ***Into the Wild as a Quest of Spirituality***

The main motive of my research is to show why the main character Christopher Johnson McCandless gives up the wealthy life into the wilderness. Even though he is from seemingly affluent and prosperous family and is well educated too, he leaves everything behind and seeks nature so that he can find the sense of belonging and self-gratification. What is the reason that makes a young guy leave everything and wander into the wilderness? However the main point of this research is not to criticize the result of McCandless's life or decisions he made but to explore why he chose the wilderness as an escape from American mainstream society. This research also aims to find out whether or not the main character finds his journey to enlighten himself through solitude and contact of nature. To McCandless everything in nature is extremely precious and should be treasured with great care and affection. It is quite evident that nature holds a very special place in his heart as something very precious, may be even sacred.

Travel literature is a "nonfiction prose form that depends largely on the wit, powers of observation and character of the traveler for its success. In past centuries, the traveler tended to be an adventurer or connoisseur of art, landscape, or strange customs who may also have been a writer of merit" (n.pag). defines *the Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*.

*Into the wild* is a biography of McCandless, based on Krakauer's interviews with family members, friends and people who McCandless encountered on his way, as well as on the study of evidence such as letters to friends and notes that he left behind before his death. However, the book is much more than an ordinary nonfiction biography. Based on a long article that Krakauer published in *Outside* magazine, it is written in a style that resembles a detective story, which pushes the plot forward

through reflections and anecdotes from multiple sources. For instance, to throw oblique light on the life of McCandless, Krakauer presents the stories of other men who died in similar circumstances and even narrates his own experience climbing the Devils Thumb in Alaska. Krakauer's first person point of view shows his thoughts and his experiences as he climbs the Devil's thumb. Krakauer can easily show his encounter with the wild and what runs through his mind. His first person point of view also symbolizes how McCandless could have felt during his hike on the Stampede Trail. Krakauer's experiences were similar to that of McCandless's because the Devil's Thumb is abreast to the Stampede Trail and they went through comparable weather conditions.

The interest of being weak is the inverse of being brave, free-vivacious young fellow; the two practices negate each other. All things considered, a person with the two qualities can be distinguished in Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*. McCandless has an eminent life, until the point that he chooses to relinquish his way of life and separate himself keeping in mind the end goal to persevere through a hazardous life-taking experience. One may think about McCandless as a swashbuckler for testing himself and living off the land, yet at the same time others view him as a weakling for walking out on his issues. McCandless's activities can't be described to one particular conduct, because of the way that all through his voyage he is a balanced character. The instances in the books and reviews suggest that McCandless's childhood was troublesome and he and his sister were exposed to constant home violence. McCandless's father, Walt McCandless was an eminent aerospace engineer and father of eight children from two marriages. He was fifty-six at the time of McCandless's death. He is taciturn, passionate and stubborn, much like his son, and also brilliant, musically talented, with a mercurial temper.

Chris's father was already married to Marcia McCandless and also had kids before he met Billie McCandless, Chris's actual mom. His difference reached to par when he discovered that his father was never married to Billie. Besides, his relation with Marcia even after divorce and the fact that his father has another child with even after McCandless and his sister were born, grew rage within himself against his father. McCandless rejects his parents' assistance decisively and perhaps somewhat aggressively, declairing in a letter to his sister that he cannot accept any gifts from them "because they will think they have bought my respect" (21). He does not want to sell his respect to his parents. He thinks that respect should be owned and it cannot be bought. McCandless has strong dislike for wealth. Yet not riches itself, but what riches do to people. He believes that it gives people false sense of power and security. These people with riches then attempt to purchase control, bliss and truth. In McCandless's eyes the concept of wealth having any power is distorted.

Goodness, how one wish once in a while to escape from the insignificant bluntness of human persuasiveness, from every one of those brilliant expressions, to take asylum in nature. One needs to go to the nature to drop all the tensions he is having in his life. He believes that people need to go into the wilderness to be real. The people who are there in the society making rules and regulations are the fake ones. He wishes to escape from the meaninglessness and dullness of human eloquence. So he thinks nature is the best place to be at. You can be what you truly desire to be. Nature is the only way to find real inner-self. Krakauer writes:

Walt's split with his first wife Marcia was not clean or amicable parting. Long after falling in love with Billie, long after she gave birth to Chris, Walt continued his relationship with Marcia in secret, dividing his time between two households, two families. Lies were told

and then exposed, begetting more lies to explain away the initial deceptions. Two years after Chris was born, Walt fathered another son, Quinn McCandless with Marcia. When Walt's double life came to light, the revelations inflicted deep wounds. All parties suffered terribly. (121)

Both McCandless and Carine witnessed domestic violence during their childhood. They were not able to spend their childhood as other children of their age. He suffered a lot mentally. To make himself mentally strong and to share his all mental pressures in the nature, he chooses the way to nature. The only way he can find real happiness and joy in life. He learns that joy never comes from the ties of human relationships. McCandless believes that social ties and human relationships are the factors that kill your adventurous spirit. That adventurous travel is what makes life worth living. Even if it is just for a short period of time, it is ok to leave everything behind and experience things far from reality. He believes that one cannot live to the fullest if you do not experience as much adventures as possible.

McCandless and his sister Carine suffered domestic violence in their childhood which may be the reason that McCandless does not like to be with any one for a long period of time. He fears to become intimate with everyone he meets on his way. Besides all the negativity they have had a luxurious childhood. Since Walt and Billie had decent paying jobs and had their own company, they never had to suffer poverty. They go for hiking where McCandless enjoys a lot and go for a tour abroad quite few times. But his father's bully and mother's helplessness brought no solace. Though they are celebrated figure in community he could glare in the imperfections they are trying to hide in front of society.

McCandless has always shown a characteristic of a bright young man. He was a good athlete, student and guided by strict moral principles. But deep down he was angry with the way society judged, directed and obliged its people in their mechanism. He describes this as a major hypocrisy that society should get rid of. McCandless's friend, Andy Horowitz on the Woodson High cross country team believed he was born in wrong century. He was searching for more adventure and freedom that today's society gives to people. American society seems to centre around the idea of the American Dream of going to college to get a good job, to buy a house, to buy a car, etc. McCandless fared well at Emory, a top university, and seemed troubled by materialism with which he was raised and the problems that wealth and the acquisition of wealth caused in his own family.

McCandless developed his love for nature since childhood. He was never considered anti social but he could always entertain himself alone. He had very few friends and loved his sister Carine dearly. As he grew up he is more exposed to society and its ways. The more he learns about the society the more he discovers the lies, hatred, selfishness, he witnesses in family.

He starts his journey with very minimal material possessions. he thinks that happiness does not come with the material wealth you possess but the true happiness comes when you surrender yourself into the nature without any worries. Though having so little things to start his journey, he is not worried at all. He wants to make his journey as adventurous as he can. He gets a ride from a truck driver from Fairbanks, Alaska. McCandless introduces himself as Alex. He says he is from south Dakota and requests for a ride to Denali national park. The driver was an electrician whose name was Gallien. He tells the driver that he wants to walk deep in the bush and live off the land for a few months.

During their two hours' drive, Gallien changes his opinion about the young man. Firstly he thinks the young man to be intelligent and thoughtful but after sometime he changes his opinion about McCandless and thinks that the guy is just a delusional visitor to the Alaskan Frontier. Gallien recognizes that the guy lacks basic necessities to survive in Alaskan bush. When Gallien offers to drive him all the way to Anchorage, buy him some decent gears and then drive him back to wherever he wants to go, Alex replies, "No, thanks anyways. I will be fine with what I have got" (6). When he says this to Gallien, we can sense that he does not want help from anyone. More than that he even fears to get attached with people. He is happy with whatever he has. He does not want more. One can also see that he does not have greed over material wealth. He thinks that nature is the absolute wealth. We can never go beyond the nature. McCandless simply is one young man, who, anybody would hope to be a little piece of that big American dream. But he breaks the chain and leaves whatever he has everything behind and goes into the nature. He was against "Capitalism", the very corner stone of US economy.

He was never fond of settling down, getting a job and live rest of the life clearing debts and paying mortgage. But he was very serious about the injustice around the world. Gallien again asks whether he has a hunting license or not. "Hell No" Alex scoffed. "How I feed myself is none of the government's business. Fuck their stupid rules"(6). By his words it is easy to analyze that he is totally fed up with all these rules and regulations of the society. He does not want any obligations. He just wants to be free from all the limitations that society ties upon any individual. He wants to be independent and does not want any kind of help from anybody. He says that no one should interfere in anybody's matter, not even the government. It is his choice how he will live his life. He wants to be the man of his choice. He wants to

shape everything on his own. To escape from all sorts of limitations and boundaries, he wants to go into the wild and live his life peacefully. He wants to search his true identity which he lost there in so called high society.

All through his movements, McCandless ends up being an extremely free man, depending just upon his own impulses to drive himself towards his aspirations. When conversing with a friend in Slab City, he uncovers one of the significant standards that he lives by is if you need something throughout everyday life, you just got to connect and get it. Instead of simply lounging around, sitting silently for things to be done by others for you. McCandless trusts that the best way to genuinely get what one needs is to seek after it all alone. Not only this, but one should do so unflinchingly, just reach out and do it instead of wasting one's time worrying about all of the hurdles that might be in one's way. Without such an attitude, McCandless would have never been able to go out on his expedition in first place, and would likely be living in what he sees as society's shackles. By following his own desires, he was able to live the genuine natural experience he was looking for, and realize his dreams. Nature does not just simply explain the infinite beauty but it also represents divinity, literally the face of God. "The trip was to be an odyssey in the fullest sense of the word, an epic journey that would change everything" (22). However, the nature is a resource to be mined. Nature is no more a refuge for one's spiritual problems than a dumping ground for one's unwanted material garbage.

McCandless purchases a second hand yellow Datsun car when he was senior in high school. He goes on to the trips alone, whenever he gets free time from the classes and sessions. While on graduation weekend, he casually says to his parents that he wants to spend upcoming summer on the road as well. He says, "I think I am going to disappear for a while" (21). When he says he is going to disappear, his father

gently says, "Hey, make sure you come to see us before you go" (21). He smiles and sort of nods so that his parents are convinced that he will come to see them before he starts his journey.

He wants to disappear in the nature. He does not want any big things in life. He just wants to avoid all the social ties and limitations of the society. He wants to be free like a bird. He does not need anybody with him. He can stay alone and happy. For him happiness does not come from the people or the material wealth. He is his own friend and wants to get connected to nature. He does not believe in all the human relationships and he even does not want to stay in that so called modern society. He just wants to go there in the nature and be there. He thinks that the social rules and limitations are just to isolate people. For him these rules do not exist. So to get rid from all these social ties and human relationships, he wants to disappear from that high class society and go on a trip,, alone, into the wilderness.

McCandless, in a letter to Carine before his Alaskan odyssey, states that he plans to "completely knock our parents out of my life. I'm going to divorce them as parents once and for all and never speak to those idiots again as long as I live" (65). He does not only want to escape from the modern and sophisticated world but also from his parents. The main reason behind him abandoning his parents is based on his childhood where he could never see love. He loves his sister dearly but does not want to see his parents ever again. He just wants to divorce them as parents not for a short period of time but for as long as he lives.

When he works at McDonald's, he writes to Janburres and Bob, whom he meets on his way. They are not far away in California's Imperial Valley. They plan on visiting him but before they can, he turns up at their campfire. He tells them he quit his job because he is tired of plastic people he worked with. He does not think people



who are money minded and those who always run after money and material wealth are the real ones. They don't know the true meaning of life. They are just living for this material wealth that even does not make any difference. He was obsessed with novels since his childhood days and stories of Jack London, who condemned capitalism and glorified nature. McCandless is always searching for inner-self. He wants to discover the real Christopher McCandless who was lost in the society of plastic people. He goes on into the nature to find out the new Christopher McCandless because he knows that he does not belong to the society he is living in. He wants to go to his real place where he belongs, that is into the wilderness. He does not want any kind of interferences on the way he lives his life. He wants to explore the outer limit of self, leaving everything behind and seek enlightenment through solitude and contact with nature.

McCandless is a very unique kind of person. In the book, Jon Krakauer tries his best to comprehend McCandless's excursion to the Alaskan wild. All through the book, McCandless goes on his journey to discover joy inside his own life and achieves it in the end. All through his adolescent to adult years it is very clear that McCandless has a connection to the wild and nature. In chapter 11, as Walt thinks back about Chris and their family camp and treks, he reflects, "Chris loved those trips, the longer the better" (108). McCandless used to love his family trips whenever they go on a family camp and treks. He wants to spend almost all of his time with the nature. Being in the nature is one of the greatest sources of inner joy. He loves travelling from his very young age. The longer trips used to be his favorites. Throughout his journey, he searches joy, happiness and even wants to discover himself. McCandless wanders alone into the Alaskan wilderness. He discovers the

bliss he was longing for. It is a kind of happiness that he can just experience when he is with nature.

Jon Krakauer investigates human interest and the motivation behind life and nature. Krakauer documents the life and demise of Chris McCandless, a young fellow who leaves on an odyssey in the Alaskan wild. As Chris ventures into the Alaskan wild, he is able to find the happiness he was longing for. It is a type of happiness that he can experience when he is with nature. Nature is a place for healing. After believing nature to be a refuge, nature then becomes man's objective. If this thing can heal us or make us happy, we have to have it. McCandless idealizes nature as a means of offering solution to his existential problems. It seems that he is able to find peace in nature. He is able to think in ways he is unable to in urban space that is commonly associated with stress, congestion and powerlessness. Nature can in fact heal us physically. Like many people McCandless believes that he can give his life significance by seeking after an association with nature. All through his trip, McCandless meets a few people who really want to help and become a close acquaintance with him. Nonetheless, he is so dedicated to his Alaskan odyssey that he feels like human connection are only a diversion, not a need. He believes that he can give meaning to his life by pursuing a relationship with nature. He likewise trusts that dismissing and rejecting human relationship abandoning his materialistic ways and purchasing a book about wildlife will fortify his relationship with nature.

Almost everyone who encountered McCandless knew that Alaska had become his objective: "Charlie: But like I was saying, Alaska,- yeah, he talked about going to Alaska. . ." (43); Jan Burre: "I thought Alex had lost his mind when he told us about his 'great Alaskan odyssey,' as he called it. But he was really excited about it. He could not stop talking about the trip." (46); Roland Franz: "He confided that he was

biding his time until spring, when he intended to go to Alaska and embark on an ultimate adventure"(52); Wayne Westerberg: "That spring, however, McCandless's sights were fixed unflinchingly on Alaska. He talked about it at every opportunity" (68). More than an objective, Alaska had become his obsession. Nearly everybody who experienced McCandless realized that Alaska had turned into his goal. However he is extremely amped up for it.

Throughout his journey, McCandless met several people who genuinely wanted to help and befriend him. However, he is so committed to his Alaskan odyssey that he feels like human relationships are just a distraction, not a necessity. One of these people, Ronald Franz, enjoys McCandless's company so much that he wants to adopt him. McCandless reacts to his proposition by pursuing a job offer and discreetly slipping out of Franz's life. Once the job offer proved to be fluke, McCandless desperately calls Franz and asks for a ride. By asking for help in the form of a car, McCandless demonstrates that his journey is beginning to challenge his beliefs. Although McCandless is initially against materialism, he is beginning to realize that it is also beneficial to his journey. McCandless has deep problems with intimacy, which are very central in his ultimately fatal two-year quest meaning and peace. During these two years, McCandless does not contact his sister, with whom he was very close. While on his way he meets many people and becomes close to a few, he always makes sure to maintain a certain distance. By abandoning his old beliefs, McCandless demonstrates that exploring nature is an experience that can significantly change one's beliefs. Although we think that McCandless needed human relationships, he continues to pursue a life of isolation in the Alaskan wilderness. As he walks around the Sushana River, McCandless spots an abandoned bus and decides to use it for shelter.

Krakauer visited the bus a year later and discovered that McCandless grows quite attached to the old bus.

Many people live within unhappy circumstances and nobody will take the initiation to change their situation. Since they are molded to an existence of security, congruity and conservatism, all of which may seem to give one genuine feelings of serenity, however as a general rule nothing is all the more harming to the brave soul inside a man than a protected future. The simple essential center of a man's living soul is his obsession for enterprise. The delight of life originates from our experiences with new encounters and thus there is no more prominent satisfaction than to have as unendingly evolving skyline, for everyday to have another and diverse sun. On the off chance that you need to get more out of life, you should lose your tendency for tedious security and receive a style of life that will at first appear to you to be insane. In any case, once you wind up acquainted with such an existence you will see its full significance and its inconceivable magnificence.

For two long years he abandons his phone, pets and cigarettes. He goes on and on into the wilderness. And he is proud of himself that he does not use any of the wealth, because he believes adventure travel is what makes life worth living. For him, there is nothing greater than the feeling of leaving everything, be it for just a short period of time; to be completely away from the world and experience things far beyond realms of imagination. He believes that one cannot live life to the fullest if you do not experience a much of it as possible. He is clearly proud of himself, and proud of what he has accomplished. McCandless is finally free from civilization and can walk free in the wild. Disregarding other people's judgments makes McCandless a complete person since now he can walk into the wild without any negative step backs from society. McCandless also realizes that material things are just dirt of hands and

nothing else in life. He comes from a middle class family with life filled with wealth and privilege, but translates to a destitute man.

McCandless establishes his camp just outside of Denali National park, where he survives for nearly four months. The man who picked him up and drove him most of the along the Alaska Highway recalls the pride he displayed before his trip: "He said he did not want to see a single person, no airplanes, and no sign of civilization. He wanted to prove himself that he could make it on his own, without anybody else's help" (158). In Fairbanks, McCandless purchases a guide to the region's edible plants at the University of Alaska bookstore. Three days later he hitches a ride to a path known as Stampede Trail and proceeds to hike twenty miles into the bush. He notes in his journal that he had originally planned to continue walking westward, declaring that he might walk all the way to the Bering Sea. Yet when the woods prove too densely thicketed, McCandless resigns himself to setting up camp at an old bus that was abandoned by developers in the 1960s after plans to build a road fell through. After two months of successfully living off edible plants and small game, McCandless apparently decides to end his tenure in the wild, and hikes back toward the road. To his surprise, he discovers that the Teklanika River, which he forded easily at the beginning of the summer, is now impassable. He returns to his encampment, where he manages for another two months.

However, despite a varied diet, he burns more calories than he consumes. Experimenting with ways to reverse his dramatic weight-loss, he begins consuming the seed pods of wild potato plants. Although the fact is not documented in his guidebook, these pods are toxic and likely McCandless's consumption of them cause him to starve to death. As kraukauer stresses, Mccandless betrays no signs of bitterness as he approaches death. His final note reads, "I have had a happy life and

thank the Lord. Goodbye and May God bless all!" (199). In a potentially revealing gesture, however, he signs an S.O.S. note affixed to the bus by his family name, Chris McCandless. By contrast, the declaration of independence, he scrawls on the inside wall of the bus at the beginning of his sojourn bears the signature of his alias, "Alexander Supertramp". It declares: "Ten days and nights of freight trains and hitchhiking bring him to the great white north. No longer to be poisoned by civilization he flees, and walks alone upon the land to get lost *Into the Wild*" (163). As McCandless breathes his final breathe, he is finally able to find his internal satisfaction, through the Alaskan wild. Krakauer notes about McCandless's last photograph of himself, portraying Chris as, "he found a sense of contentment, quiet as a monk gone to God" (199).

Christopher McCandless, who makes another life for himself by leaving human progress to live in the wild, The story displays how McCandless creates and develops all through the story by winning unforgiving problems and learning profitable exercises in transit. His character advances by fathoming a few new exercises, for example, discovering genuine joy, ignoring other individuals' judgments, and in addition understanding that material things are just simply material things and that's it. In nature, he concentrates just on himself and survival, instead of his inconveniences at home, the requirements of others, or the principles of society. As it were, he was compelled to go into the outside due to these poor connections and inward clashes inside himself.

All through the story, McCandless battles to find the genuine fulfillment in his life. He develops and matures throughout the story by prevailing harsh predicaments and learning valuable lessons on the way. His character evolves by comprehending several new lessons such as finding true pleasure, disregarding other

people judgments, as well as realizing that material things are just material things and nothing else. All through the story, he struggles to discover the true satisfaction in his life. He stops listening to other people's judgments whether it is good or bad about his life choices. He learns that his happiness is much more important than what other people's judgments are. The manner in which he is depicted in the photo demonstrates that McCandless has in truth discovered the satisfaction that he was searching for and could leave this world in peace. In spite of the fact that he is in extreme agony, from starvation, he is ready to locate the brilliant side of things. He is able to die in the one place that he has desire to be at.

### **Conclusion: Submersion into Nature as a Response to Materialism**

Instead of always tailing the protagonist in the story which could have possibly broken the realm of non-fiction considering we never experience everything he does, the author offers us the viewpoint of those who grew up with Chris McCandless, met him while on his journey, and other analysts expressing the nature of Chris. Everyone has a different opinion of the protagonist. Many saw him as spirited young man attempting to find himself, while several others saw his actions as foolhardy and unnecessarily audacious. Krakauer has given the reader a broad spectrum of opinion in order to offer as many views of Chris McCandless as he can. It is because, in the end, McCandless is whoever we think he is, by culminating all the data, we can gather our own view of the character and conclude the overall perception of the life and times of Christopher McCandless. People are not as simple as they seem. Even when the puzzle seems put together, there are still several more pieces missing.

The story shows how McCandless creates and develops all through the story by winning cruel difficulties and learning to live the life to the fullest without material

wealth. His character evolves by comprehending several new lessons such as finding true pleasure, disregarding other person's judgments as well as realizing that material things are just material things and nothing else. All through the story, he struggles to discover the true satisfaction in life.

From his childhood days, McCandless has a connection with the nature and the wild. He loves to be there. He used to be really very happy whenever he was on a trip. He loves to be in the nature, forgetting all the problems and sorrows. He believes that the true sense of happiness is found whenever you are in the nature and you are not truly living if your life is not adventurous. The story shows how Christopher makes and builds up all through the story by winning unforgiving issues and learning productive activities in travel. McCandless's character propels by comprehending a couple of few activities, for instance, finding certified happiness, overlooking other people's judgments, and what's more understanding that material things are essentially material things and that is it and nothing else.

In nature, McCandless focuses just on himself and survival, rather than his parents at home, the necessities of others or the standards of the society. So to speak, he was constrained to go into the outside because of these poor associations and internal conflicts inside himself. All through the story, he fights to locate the honest to goodness satisfaction in his life. He creates and develops all through the story by winning cruel difficulties and learning profitable exercises in transit. His character advances by understanding a few new exercises, for example, discovering genuine delight, slighting other individuals' judgments, and also understanding that material things are nothing. All through the story, McCandless battles to find the genuine fulfillment in his life. He quits tuning into other individuals' judgments whether it is great or awful about his life decisions. He discovers that his joy is substantially more



critical than what others' judgments are. The way in which he portrayed in the photograph shows that he has in truth found the fulfillment that he was hunting down and could leave this world in peace. Despite the way that he is in extraordinary anguish, from starvation, he is prepared to find the splendid side of things. He can bite the dust in the one place that he wants to be at.

Chris "Alexander Supertramp" McCandless, the question of Krakauer's interest, makes another life for himself by forsaking his family and childhood and taking to the street for a roaming presence. Following two long stretches of this travelling; he set out on his last awesome experience, an excursion to the Alaskan wild propelled by the works of Jack London. What he was truly looking for was not another landscape, but rather a feeling of peace inside him, an opportunity to quiet the turbulent feelings coming from a complicated relationship with his family, specially his dad.

At the point when McCandless's wellbeing was starting to blur and he understood that demise was seemingly within easy reach, he crept into the resting sack his mom had sewn for him and slept into obviousness. The spot in which he entered extreme peace was made by the mother with whom he had sliced off contact so as to mitigate his sentiments. This activity demonstrated that McCandless discovered his adjust inside, regardless of whether he stood away forever home to indicate it. The last confirmation of his internal peace was clear into the photo he took of himself before he passes on. Chris McCandless finds a sense of contentment, quiet as a priest gone to God.

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