

# Essay on into the wild

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



Into the Wild is a story of a young graduate from Emory University, who belongs to a well to do family. This novel, written by Jon Krakauer, is based on the true story of Chris McCandless. McCandless has been portrayed as a very passionate human being who lets his feelings overrule his sensibility. After learning that his father had another family when he was a child, McCandless turns into another person. His sense of betrayal is so overwhelming that he starts to keep all his friends and family at bay and never gets too close to them. After completing his graduation he gives away his savings of twenty five thousand dollars to charity and leaves his home without informing anyone. As soon as he leaves Atlanta, he leaves his car in a deserted place and then goes on with his journey through hitchhiking. For the next two years he travels constantly, never settling in one place, takes on a few jobs and then finally embarks on a plan to live in the wilderness of Alaska. However, due to lack of preparation and poor conditions, he grows frail and then the poisonous seed which he eats further intensifies the pain leading him to his death. Keeping in mind the fact that McCandless was a fervent and a passionate man, I think that he was a foolish man who lost his life due to his fanatical ideas and beliefs.

Besides being a vehement man, Chris McCandless was also a stubborn man and this idea is represented throughout the book. This is also observed in his relationship with his father. When he comes to know of his father's other family, he is so angry and furious that he refuses to think rationally.

Moreover, on the basis of this news he starts to map out his life. I believe that he leaves his family to cause his father the same pain that he went through. Instead of communicating with his father, which was a sensible

thing to do, he starts to bottle up feelings inside him which affects him negatively. This stubbornness leads to selfishness due to which he destroys his own life. He doesn't stop and think even for once that how his actions will cause immense pain and suffering to others. This can be seen when his father says in the book:

“ Seven weeks after the body of his son turned up in Alaska wrapped in a blue sleeping bag that Billie had sewn for Chris from a kit, Walt studies a sailboat scudding beneath the window of his waterfront townhouse. ‘ How is it,’ he wonders aloud as he gazes blankly across Chesapeake Bay, ‘ that a kid with so much compassion could cause his parents so much pain?’”(Into the Wild, 103-104)

**These lines show that what his parents went through because of his lack of sensibility and imprudent ideas.**

The second key element which proves that the actions of McCandless were foolish is his attraction towards a dangerous life. In the book, we are told that he was a gifted student, an all-rounder, but he was not satisfied with this kind of a life. He led his parents to believe that he wanted to become a lawyer, which was absolutely wrong at his part. If he would have been an adventurous soul, he wouldn't have neglected the necessities which he should have taken with him when he went to Alaska. Instead he kept on pushing himself to an extreme which was a foolish decision on his part. This is best exemplified as:

“ Two years he walks the earth, no phone, no pool, no pets, and no cigarettes. Ultimate freedom. An extremist. An aesthetic voyager whose home is the road. Escaped from Atlanta. Thou shalt not return, ‘ cause “ the

West is the best.” And now after two rambling years comes the final and greatest adventure, the climactic battle to kill the false being within and victoriously conclude the spiritual revolution. 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 become lost in the wild”. (Into the Wild, 163)

This quote is representative of his extremist behavior. Moreover, it also throws light on the fact that he kept on punishing himself for no specific reason.

His sense of keeping everyone at a distance is also clearly an unnecessary step. The readers do sympathize with him but it is also a fact that when he never lets anyone get closer to him, he is hurting other people. He is also hurting himself but he keeps on doing so with himself so that he never forgets that pain from which he had suffered because of his father. This is evident in his relationship with Jan Burres, Wayne Westerberg, Ronald Franz and other people who really cared for him. This idea is exemplified when he leaves Burres and Westerberg instead of reciprocating their feelings of affection and warmth.

" McCandless was thrilled to be on his way north and he was relieved as well —relieved that he had again evaded the impending threat of human intimacy, of friendship, and all the messy emotional baggage that comes with it. He had fled the claustrophobic confines of his family. He'd successfully kept Jan Burres and Wayne Westerberg at arm's length, flitting out of their lives before anything was expected of him. And now he'd slipped painlessly out of Ron Franz's life as well."(Into the Wild, 55)

Then denying the obvious is also one of the negative traits viewed in McCandless's character. When Jim Gallien tries to help him he refuses to take any help. He also never takes any advice and when everybody tells him to take equipment along with him, he refuses to do so. This is an insane step which he takes and it is chiefly because of this decision that he is regarded as a foolish person who lives in his own world.

However, there are certain instances in the book which suggest otherwise.

The first is when for example he is seen as a hardworking man also.

Wherever he goes, people mistake him for a lunatic but he changes their point of view through his dedication and hard work. Furthermore, these actions were triggered in him due to the betrayal and authoritative character of his father, so his father is to be blamed partly as well. But the incidents which prove that he was a foolish man dominate these incidents.

Finally, I would like to say that McCandless was motivated by his beastly nature i. e. to say that he had an urge to cause others a pain so deep that will avenge his own suffering. It wouldn't be wrong to say that due to his own extremist nature and selfishness, he took immature actions and took his own life and this kind of behavior should be discouraged in every human being.

## **References**

Krakauer, Jon. Into the Wild. Knopf Doubleday Publishing group. 1997.