

# Into the wild and walden

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



After reading *Walden*, by Henry D. Thoreau and watching the movie titled, *Into The Wild*, written by Sean Penn, I realized how similar and different both main characters were. Christopher McCandless, the main actor in the movie and, Henry D. Thoreau, the author and main character in *Walden*, share many things in common however, their views on the world and motives for going on their journeys are very different from one another. These two men share complex views on life and how one should live that life. They differ in regards to how they deal with and go about living their lives.

Thoreau and McCandless live their lives doing what they feel makes them happy. McCandless quotes Thoreau and says, "If you want something in life, reach out and grab it" (sc. 167). Both of their journeys were beneficial for them and taught them a lot about themselves. Both of these men went out on a quest to find themselves and give insight into how they define and live with technology, finding spiritual freedom, the necessities of life, and living life to its fullest, but it is these similarities shared between the two that they also contrast each other greatly.

Both McCandless and Thoreau deal with the advancement of technology in their journeys. McCandless is the Henry D. Thoreau of the 1990s. What sets him apart from Thoreau is his view on technology. Thoreau states, "The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial..." (119). This statement is the opposite of McCandless' view. McCandless uses the advancements in technology to get to his final destination of Alaska. McCandless travels by train, which would have made Thoreau absolutely sick.

Thoreau clearly expressed his iscussed for the railroads in Walden.

McCandless also relies of cars and trucks as he hitch hikes across the country. Now in Thoreau's time there were not these elaborate highways and cars but Thoreau would not have been happy about this. If Thoreau had a problem with the railroads in the 1800s then there is no doubt he would have not agreed with the way McCandless chose to get to Alaska. They both had technology that they relied on. They both love to read and write. Ink and books were both made from the advancements in technology over centuries.

They also both had tools while out in the ilderness that they heavily relied on. They both had knives that they used all they time for cutting and cleaningfood. Thoreau had a wheelbarrow and a spade, where as McCandless had a gun, and a handbook on, what was edible in nature.

McCandless and Thoreau both went in search to find spiritual freedom and escape society. Thoreau recorded his two year experiment to express what he has learned about himself and society. McCandless also recorded his escape from society on his two year journey.

They both were out in the wilderness alone for two years as they connected to the earth spiritually. Unlike McCandless, Thoreau never mentioned problems within hisfamilyin Walden. McCandless had another reason to escape society other than to find himself, he was escaping theviolenceand troubles presented in is everyday life at home. A voiceover of Carine, McCandless sister, comes on and says " Worse yet was that it was Marcia to whom he was still legally married at the time. And it was Chris and I who were the bastard children" (sc. 53).

This shows how McCandless had so much more to leave behind than Thoreau did. This scene also give us insight into McCandless's state of mind nd how much his life at home effected him. Thoreau states, " I left the woods for as good of a reason as I went there...I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that on" (426). Thoreau's statement tells us how he just went for the purpose to get away from society and live in nature and solitude. McCandless had emotional problems brought on him by the instability of his family.

Both Thoreau and McCandless lived with the necessities of shelter and durable clothing. They both had shelters that were made by man.

McCandless lived in a bus out in he Alaskan wilderness, and Thoreau lived in a cabin at Walden pond. Thoreau and McCandless had to deal with the airiness of their homes. Thoreau says, " This was an airy and unflustered cabin, fit to entertain a traveling god..." (110). Thoreau however did have a functioning cabin where as, McCandess lived in a bus that was converted into a house.

Thoreau had a more room to move around as well as better protection from the weather. McCandless lived in more open and colder environmentthan Thoreau had to. Both men also relied on their clothing to be durable and able to withstand the elements. The harshness of their living conditions required them to have warm and durable clothing. They did not have enough room in their bags to bring every item of clothing they owned. It had to be functional year round as well as strong enough to hold over a duration of two years of hunting and gathering.

Thoreau had did not have as much variety of clothing to chose from as McCandless did. McCandless was born in a generation that made clothes in mass quantities and clothes were more accessible to everyone plus McCandless had his parents to buy him clothes over the years. Thoreau and McCandless were both college graduates that lived their lives to the fullest. Thoreau graduated from Harvard and McCandless graduated from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Both men were highly educated and were very knowledgeable in many aspects but prefer not to have a job.

McCandless says to Mr. Franz , “ I think careers are a twentieth century invention and I don’t want one. You don’t need to worry about me. I have a college education. I’m not destitute. I’m living like this by choice” (sc. 185). They both were philosophizers and knew about the uselessness of possessions. McCandless donated twenty-six thousand dollars to Oxfam, cut up his identification card, and credit cards. Thoreau however, did not give up his possessions, he just set them off to the side until his experiment was complete.

McCandless lived the last two years of his life doing what he wanted and exploring nature. He died doing what he wanted to do, not what he had to do. Although Thoreau did not die during his experiment he lived his life the same way. Thoreau knew that for one to be happy, one must live their lives doing what they want. Both men lived their lives to the fullest and did what they wanted to do. McCandless and Thoreau have learned so much about themselves and about how the world works, whether its for the better or not, while out in the wild.

As these two men have traveled and lived in their final destinations they have had to deal with technology, finding spiritual freedom, the necessities of life, and living life to its fullest, to make it there. Thoreau says, " If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer" (430). Thoreau is saying that it does not matter how you match up to others or if you follow other people, only he or she can make their life worth living and worth telling about.

Both McCandless and Thoreau have similarities but because they are different people they also have many contrasts between them. They both benefited from their journeys and have taught us all something. They have both gained knowledge of the world and of themselves while out in the wild. They teach us that if one wants to be happy, do that which makes one happy. Their journeys are something we can all do for ourselves. And if we do go on a journey like this we won't always have the same answer for questions but will be faced with the same questions of life.