

The life of chris mccandless in into the wild by jon krakauer

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Jon Krakauer's bestseller *Into the Wild* is at first glance a biography and background story to an event that made national headlines; but on a closer look it actually turns out to be an attempt at documenting the human condition and trying to simplify life into a straight forward story, instead of the complex mess it really is, along with showing readers how much of a lasting effect Chris McCandless left on people and the importance of personal connections. Krakauer manages to describe his subject, Chris McCandless' life through using interviews with people who had known him in life to tell the reader how Chris lived and the impressions he left on people, instead of Krakauer simply describing Chris himself.

This is a recurring motif throughout the entire story, where Chris left a sizable impact on just about anyone he met on his journey, so much so that even someone Chris described as a "lunatic" still remembered Chris clearly years later and was able to describe McCandless' behavior (Page 41). Along the same idea, Krakauer is able to profoundly describe Chris without using any words of his own, instead using the words of an old woman to paint a picture for the reader of who Chris was and she said "I only spent a few hours in [Chris'] company, it amazes me how much I'm bothered by his death" (Page 67). Coming from an aged woman, this statement carries particular weight because it makes Chris seem to be a once in a lifetime person, who could make an impression on just about anyone he ever had the chance of speaking with.

However, although Krakauer seems to hit his stride in the book when using interviews to describe McCandless, this author still makes a dignified attempt

at simplifying the complicated thing called life, even if he did trip up occasionally. Krakauer tries to make Chris' story into a narrative by leaving out what he deemed boring and only filling the reader in on what he thought was necessary for the "central plot" of Chris' life to advance. For example, Krakauer completely skips an enormous chunk of Chris' trip into Alaska, and the reader only becomes aware of this time skip after someone being interviewed about Chris says that they drove him for a thousand miles, although Krakauer only spends a few paragraphs on this particular person and their interactions with Chris (Page 160).

Another part in the story where I felt that Krakauer slipped and simply was not able to make his narrative of Chris work smoothly, was Chris' adventure down south into Mexico. On a 5-month canoe excursion into Mexico, Krakauer seems to be unable to give any reasoning as to why this journey important for Chris and why the reader even needs to know this event ever happened, like he did for most other events in Chris' life that Krakauer describes. Krakauer seems to almost forget this event even happened later in the story, never referencing it again. Although this seems like it would've been a very eventful journey in Chris' life, Jon only spends about three pages in total on this trip and what it meant for Chris, which I felt was strange seeing as for almost every other aspect of Chris' life, Krakauer writes as if he were telling a story and did not want the audience to miss any important details, but he for some reason chose to virtually never again mention Chris' trip down south, and the significance it had for Chris.

However, even through some of his missteps, Jon Krakauer is still able to paint a beautiful picture and make sense of the life of someone who tried to make their own life unfollowable. He was able to redeem the legacy of Chris McCandless and show him off to the world as a extraordinary individual.