

## *Into the Wild and the Meaning of Life*

Natsuki Maekawa

### Japanese Summary

マッカンドレスは裕福な家庭に生まれ、学校でも成績はトップクラスであった。昔から父親や祖父の影響で山登りをするなど自然によく触れていた。彼が成長するにつれて、両親との考え方が合わないと感じ始めたマッカンドレスはある日無言で家族から離れ、一人で旅に出た。目指した場所はアラスカである。旅の途中でいろんな人と出会い、いろんな経験をしたと思われるが、最終的に彼はアラスカのあるバスの中で死体として発見される。家族から離れて約2年後のことだった。

私が最初に提示した疑問は、「何故マッカンドレスはウィルダネスへ行ったのか」である。これは大きくて漠然とした課題であるように感じるが、以下の3点を詳しく見ていくことで明らかにすることができる。①マッカンドレスの育ってきた環境と彼に影響を与えたもの、②著者ジョン・クラカワーのかつての経験と自然に対する考え方、③18世紀ごろから見ることのできるアメリカ人の自然・ウィルダネスに対する一般的な考え方である。

第一章では、マッカンドレス自身について考えた。彼が幼い頃、両親は四六時中働いていて、心を通わせることができたのは妹のカリーンだけであったということ、彼が大きくなってから発覚した父ウォルトの二重結婚、そして彼がいかに両親の敷いたレールに沿って生きていくことに嫌気がさし、両親と馬が合わないと彼なりに感じていたのかということなどをこの章で取り扱う。また、マッカンドレスの祖父の影響で彼は自然を好きになったこと、彼が昔から好きだった作家や本からも彼がどれだけ自然に魅了されていたかを知ることができる。マッカンドレスは自然に向かっていった。両親に嫌気がさし、貧富差のある社会から逃れるために、有名な作家たちが体験したウィルダネスを自分も体験するために。そして、真の自分の生きる意味を探すために。

第二章では、著者ジョン・クラカワーがマッカンドレスに対してどのように思っているかを扱う。マッカンドレスの話はアメリカで当時話題になり、たくさんの人が彼を批判した。彼は十分な準備もせずアラスカへ入っていったからだ。しかしクラカワーは彼の人生を肯定している。クラカワーは、自分とマッカンドレスを重ねて見ているようである。クラカワーは登山家であり、いくつかの危険な山へ登頂している。その中の一つが「Devil Thumb」という山であり、彼は自然の恐ろしさを語っている。クラカワーは自然が人間にはかなわないものであり、雄大だが恐ろしい、だからこそ素晴らしいと感じている。そして彼はマッカンドレスもそのように感じていたはずだ、と感じているのである。この作品はジョン・クラカワーによって書かれたものであり、ここに登場するマッカンドレスの描写もクラカワーによるものである。故に、描かれたマッカンドレスが実際に存在したマッカンドレスであるとは限らないのである。

第三章は、ウィルダネスがアメリカ人にとってどういう存在であるのかを考察している。18世紀頃から自然は神聖で特別な場所だという認識が現れた。トルストイやヘンリー・デビット・ソロー、ラルフ・ウォルドー・エマーソンなどの著書などを例に、18世紀から現代までのウィルダネスへの特別視を見解している。そしてマッカンドレスも読書が好きであり、上記の

著者以外にもジャック・ロンドンの本をよく読んでいた。彼が死体として発見されたアラスカのバスの中にもいくつかの彼らの本とその横にかかれたメモが残されている。マッカンドレスは彼らに共感し、アメリカ人が一般的に考えるウィルダネスに対する思いを例外なく感じていたのである。

最後の第四章と第五章では第一章から第三章までを統括し、なぜマッカンドレスはウィルダネスへ入っていったのかを述べる。昔から自然が好きであり、ウィルダネスが特別だという著者に魅了された。成長するにつれて両親とのトラブルや社会への疑問と抵抗が募っていった。敷かれたレールよりも自分が本当に思う価値のある人生を送りたかった。これらの思いが交じり合った結果、彼は自然を目指したに違いない。そして彼は自然と孤独の中で家族や人の大切さに気付いたのかもしれない。では本当に彼の人生は意味のあるものだったのだろうか。それらについて考察し、結論とする。

## Introduction

*“Into the Wild”* is a true story about a man whose name is Chris McCandless. He is the man who was found in the abandoned bus in the wild of Alaska as the dead body. He hadn't contacted his parents since he left his house; therefore, his parents didn't know where he was and what he had been doing at all. He was born in a rich house and graduated from Emory University with an excellent record. His parents expected him to go to law school after university; however, he donated his school expenses deposit and threw away his identification, then left home with no news. Then, two years later, he was found in Alaska. During his journey, he seemed to have a lot of experiences and met some people. From their testimony and his diary, we can generally know where he was and what he did. He seemed that he was telling them that he aimed to go to Alaska and want to stay in the wild only with essential tools. He eventually went there; however, he couldn't survive for a long time. It is said that he died because of starving. He was only 24 years old.

When I read this book for the first time, I wondered why he aimed for Alaska and why he wanted to stay in the wild. I felt he didn't have any difficulties for his life because he was in peace when he was with family, and in university. Therefore he didn't have to put his environment in danger. I think there are no right answers because McCandless is not here. Therefore, I should consider what McCandless aimed to do by this book, this movie, and the author, Jon Krakauer, and the people who argue this story.

Here is the points I have; think about McCandless' background, the author, Krakauer's attention for McCandless, and general thinking about wilderness for American.

From the point of McCandless's background, I can see why he visited wilderness and spent time there. Also, from this point I will get to know how he got inspired to wilderness, what was the reason why he chose wilderness and why he chose Alaska for the place he aim.

Krakauer's attention is also one of the important point because he wrote the book which is McCandless side. His job, his background, and how he think about wilderness influenced how he describe McCandless. There are many people who think McCandless's journey in Alaska was not great, he was just one of the young men who visit there; however, Krakauer didn't think like that. From his point of view, I will think

how the people who like wilderness think about it and how dangerous it is.

Additionally, there are American mainstream for wilderness. American people in general, think wilderness is special place which doesn't have any creations. Also McCandless had some writers he really liked and they had similar point of view to wilderness. He might have got interested in wilderness from them. From this search, I can think what the reason for him to visit the wild was.

## 1. Why does McCandless go to the wild?

1-1.

First, I consider why he went into the wild. I start to think about what McCandless was looking for. He had written many letters to his friends who met him during his journey. He said to Westerberg, who is a farmer and met McCandless during his journey, by letter "my days were more exciting when I was penniless and had to forage around for my next meal" (p.33). To support what he said, he burned his money at the beginning of his journey. In common sense, living without pennies are tough situation for all human being of today. You cannot eat food well, cannot change clothes, and cannot buy something you want. It seems nothing is fun; however, McCandless wrote that he enjoyed the situation. It means that he wanted to live without money and the life means something for him. He seems he had this strong mind from the beginning. Also the idea is not that he made in the middle of the journey, but he already had before he started it. From these actions, it seems that McCandless doesn't want to feel "market." He wanted to take food with no money and move with no money. Additionally, the journal told us that "Alexandar buried his backpack in the desert on 2/27 and entered Las Vegas with no money and no ID" (p.37) (Alexandar Supertramp is a fake name of Chris McCandless). We can see that he wanted to escape from society, and he would have liked to survive by himself.

He seems that he aimed to live with no money and no ID. It means he didn't like the system of present days. Therefore, he decided to leave his place and went to Alaska to have the lifestyle which he wanted to have.

Also Franz, who is an old guy and also met him during journey, recalls "McCandless's face would darken with anger and he'd fulminate about his parents or politicians or the endemic idiocy of mainstream American life" (p.52). This testimony also supports that McCandless didn't like general American society. He must have wanted to have his life by his own. He was looking for feeling his life, his meaning of life. To make the ideal life, he went to the wild.

Even though he seemed to escape from the present society, he didn't seem to be hate people. By the book and also by the movie, we can see that he made some close friends such as Westerberg and Franz. It means that he didn't like the society, but he didn't have any problem to have relationships with people. However, when Franz ask McCandless that he wants him to be an adopted child, McCandless declined it. I think McCandless liked to have relationship with people, but he didn't want to be too close with someone because of his journey. He wanted to live by himself. Krakauer describes McCandless in the book that McCandless "relieved that he had again evaded the impending threat of human intimacy, of friendship, and all the messy emotional baggage that comes with it" (p.55). On his journey, it is impossible to live alone

without any money, so he should meet someone at the place. He may have thought that it is not his purpose to make relationship on his journey but his purpose is living in Alaska by himself; therefore, it was unnecessary for him. From this point, also, we can see that how strong his will is.

1-2.

Then, why did he expect to find it in the wild? It doesn't have to be in wilderness. It seems that there are many solutions for him. For instance, he could leave his city or even leave America and go to other countries. He had the racial discrimination class in his university. It means he was interested in these difficult situation of our society. Also Billy, Chris's mother, told that "Chris didn't understand how people could possibly be allowed to go hungry, especially in this country," and also says "He would rave about that kind of thing for hours" (p.113). He must have had the question why the all people in the world cannot be happy without any difficulty for living. It could help him to think about the society he lives in and the meaning of his life. Another example is that he could see many culturally different people, and he could fish or hunt to eat. The lifestyle seems that he sees many people which means he didn't have to be alone, and he might have been able to live with no money. He could rethink the society and how kind the people are. Also, it was possible that he could just move to the countryside and make a living by himself by agriculture. He could learn how to live there and how hard it is. There was not only one choice to have life which he wanted to have. However, he chose the wild because he thought that was the best way to find what he wants. There are two big reasons that I think he decided to go to the wilderness; the authors he likes and American mainstream.

First reason is that he read many books since he was a child. His favorite writers were Jack London, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and so on who had some idea of wilderness. The writers have similar ideas of wilderness as a special place on the earth. There are no people and no products. McCandless brought some of their books on his journey and he read the books. The books were found in the bus at which McCandless was found. Burres, who met McCandless in Slabs, remembers

Alex was big on the classics: Dickens, H. G. Wells, Mark Twain, Jack London. London was his favorite. He'd try to convince every snowbird who walked by that they should read Call of the Wild. (p.43-44)

Actually, Jack London had spent time in the wilderness only once. However, Krakauer wrote that McCandless "conveniently overlooked the fact" and "he seemed to forget they were works of fiction". (p.44) McCandless read many of London's books and he liked them even though they have some imagination.

McCandless often marked the sentences he liked. One of the books which was found in the bus in Alaska was "*Walden*", written by Thoreau. The chapter "Higher Laws" in the book, he "circled 'Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it'" (p.66). McCandless didn't have any girlfriends after he left his hometown. I agree with what Krakauer mentions at this point. He says "McCandless may have been tempted by the succor offered by women, but it paled beside the prospect of rough congress with nature" (p.66). He may thought to be a chastity by himself, or he may got the idea from this book.

He supported what the authors thought, and he should have wanted to follow them. He must have

sympathized how to think about wilderness and people. You shall see more detail about the books in chapter 3.

Second reason is American typical thinking about wilderness. Some Americans have had the idea that wilderness is an impressive place. This is also something I will discuss later. Generally, Americans think that wilderness is a special place, not cities, and there is no electronic equipment. Therefore, it is possible that McCandless also had this American “typical” and “traditional” idea and he decided to go into the wild.

If he had this typical idea, he didn't think much about living in the wilderness. He aspired to live there because the authors whom he read often loved the wilderness, not because he thought that is the best solution of his desire. To support this, he didn't prepare well for living in the wilderness. He had less stuff than he should have. It shows that he might not think much to stay there, and just he was interested in visiting wilderness. In the book, McCandless is described that “McCandless didn't conform particularly well to the bush-casualty stereotype” (p.85). He didn't prepare enough and because of that he couldn't survive in the wilderness. That shows he didn't enter to Alaska to survive, but he enters to experience the life there. It seems that he wanted to experience what the authors he likes think.

Alaska is one of the biggest places in the world which has huge wilderness. Not only Americans, but also people around the world think that there are a lot of nature. The Japanese website of the tour company explaining that Alaska is the biggest state in the US. 95 percent of it is like the glacier and the forests which are not touched by human. There are also many national parks in Alaska. Alaska stands for wilderness; therefore, it is not unnatural to choose Alaska to feel wilderness. McCandless should have thought Alaska is the place which has wilderness and he decided to go.

1-3.

Next, I show some of McCandless' background from the book. When Chris McCandless was young, his father worked as an aerospace engineer. In 1978, he built his own business and it succeeded with Billie, who is his wife and a companion of the business. Because they worked a lot, Chris spent much time with his sister, Carine. For children, they must have felt lonely. Also, his parents had often quarreled at home. As these situations of his childhood, Chris was getting conflicting with his parents. The situation turns much worse. He found the fact that his father, Walt, committed bigamy which means he had two wives at the same time. Of course, Chris and his family didn't know about it by the time Chris found it. Because of Chris' father's bigamy, he couldn't respect his parents even though they worked much and saved money for having their children experience a good education.

Chris had a car which is beloved 1982 Datsun B210. It was a used car, but he liked it. When he graduates, his parents wanted to buy him a car; however, he declined because he liked the car. He wrote to Carine that “a car that I will never trade in, a car that I am very strongly attached to – yet they ignore what I say and think I'd actually accept a new car from them!” (p.21) Chris probably thought that he and his parents had a difference in how to think and his parents didn't know how Chris thinks. He said to his sister that their parents' behavior was “so irrational, so oppressive, disrespectful and insulting that I finally passed my breaking point” (p.64). Also he said,

Since they won't ever take me seriously, for a few months after graduation I'm going to let them think they are right, I'm going to let them think that I'm 'coming around to see their side of things' and that our relationship is stabilizing. And then, once the time is right, with one abrupt, swift action I'm going to completely knock them out of my life (p.64).

As we can see from his true feeling, his plan of aiming Alaska might start because of his parents. At least, they must be one of the biggest reasons of his journey. He couldn't believe his parents, and he didn't want to have his life which is railed by them. He probably could talk his real thinking only to his sister in his family.

While Chris resisted his parents, he respected his grandfather, who had similar personality as him. He liked nature and wild animals. He had strong influence on Chris about knowledge of nature and wilderness. He was one of the reasons that Chris got interested in wild. Walt McCandless explained that "Billie's dad didn't quite fit into society," and "in many ways he and Chris were a lot alike" (p.108). When Chris was a child, his parents work a lot, so he may have saw his grandfather often. His passion to wilderness can be from nature born, but it is also possible that it is from his grandfather. Walt McCandless also mentions that "Chris was fearless even when he was little" (p.109). That Chris decided to go to Alaska without money is also fearless action. Since he was a child, he should have had a strong heart to do anything.

Even if Chris got along with his parents, he might have gone to the wild because he grown up with hostility toward his parents and fascination for nature. Once he wrote a letter to Wayne Westerberg that "the freedom and simple beauty of it is just too good to pass up" (p.92). He was appealed by nature. Coincidentally, he wanted to leave his parents, and got interested in wilderness. From his background, we can see that his journey triggered. Also, as I wrote at 1-2, he read the books of the writers who think about wilderness, and there are American general thinking way of wilderness. He had many opportunities to think about the society and wilderness in his environment. I think these all things surrounded McCandless and it caused his journey.

2. How does Krakauer see his story?

2-1.

About McCandless's death, there are strong pros and cons. Some people think he had great life, did his best, pity and hard life in the end. Other people think he is just stupid, he didn't know how to live there, and his death was a matter of time. It is said that McCandless died of starvation. The people who are on the cons criticize that it is result of lack of preparing. He seemed to have looked down on wilderness.

Krakauer got some letters blaming McCandless. He wrote that "much of the negative mail was sent by Alaskans" (p.71). There are some letters he got.

The author describes a man who has given away a small fortune, forsaken a loving family, abandoned his traipsing off into the 'wilderness' west of Healy.

Personally I see nothing positive at all about Chris McCandless's lifestyle or wilderness doctrine," scolded another correspondent. "Entering the wilderness purposefully ill-prepared, and surviving a near-death

experience does not make you a better human, it makes you damn lucky. (p.71)

In another letter he got was saying that “his ignorance, which could have been cured by USGS quadrant and a Boy Scout manual, is what killed him” (p.71).

They are from Alaska which means they know well how to live there. For them, McCandless was just a stupid man, and they think he doesn't have to be written about like a hero.

At that time, McCandless's story was one subject for discussion in the US; therefore, there are not only in his book, but also some arguments for his story. What the author, Krakauer thinks about McCandless is pro side. From this book, I can see that he is proud of McCandless' life.

2-2.

Before giving Krakauer's point of view, I raise an example for cons. One of the people who criticizes McCandless is Peter Christian. He is an Alaska park ranger, who is the worker as protecting natural environments at national park. He wrote a short essay about McCandless which is titled “*Chris McCandless from an Alaska Park Ranger's Perspective*”.

He criticized McCandless in the essay that “I believe that the difference between us was that I wanted to live and Chris McCandless wanted to die (whether he realized it or not)” (Christian p.2). Also he insists that McCandless is not a special person. (Christian p.1) He mentioned some points for his opinion.

First, he says that many young men visit Alaska to find themselves, and Peter was one of them (Christian p.1). Alaska was a kind of popular place for someone like McCandless. Some people who escape from society and seek themselves tend to visit there. He called this “McCandless phenomenon” (Christian p.1). From what he says, we can see that there are some young people like McCandless, which means McCandless wasn't the only person who tried to spend time in wilderness, and it probably doesn't mean that every person who went there couldn't survive and died. Therefore, McCandless also could leave the wilderness safely.

Second, he argues that McCandless wasn't prepared well to survive in wilderness. Not only him, but also some young men like him were unprepared and died or were rescued by helicopter, he wrote. (Christian p.1) McCandless didn't have enough stuff to live in wilderness as I wrote at foregoing chapter. He mentions here that not only McCandless but also some other young travelers don't prepare enough. Therefore, again, McCandless wasn't a special person who did it.

Finally, he pointed out that McCandless should have had a map. He found the bus there, and spent much time around there which means that he must have known the place around the bus. If so, he could realize that the bus could go to the place without crossing the river.

If he had a map, he could also go out from the place easily. That was a big mistake of him. “If the bus could get into the place where it died, why couldn't McCandless get out of the place where he died?” (Christian p.2)

In conclusion, he mentioned that McCandless committed suicide because of these reasons. If he wanted to survive, he could learn more about hunting, preserving, and so on before entering wilderness and bring more stuff he needs. Because Christian works as Alaska park ranger, he knows a lot of people who come to Alaska. In his point of view, McCandless was one of the traveler who come into Alaska with less preparation.

In McCandless's letter to Westerberg, he wrote that "if this adventure proves fatal and you don't ever hear from me again I want you to know that you're a great man" (p.3). This letter was written when he went to the wilderness. He may have known that he could die. This point is supporting what Christian says that he committed suicide.

2-3.

One the other hand, Krakauer supports McCandless' journey was meaningful. The experience he had and his background have some similar points as McCandless.

First similarity is what Krakauer did when he was young. In his book, *"Into the Wild"*, he wrote his experience of climbing the mountain called "Devils Thumb", which is in Alaska. (Krakauer Chapter.) When he was 23, which is a year younger than McCandless when he walked into Alaska, he decided to climb "Devils Thumb" alone, "which had never been climbed, rises sheer and clean for six thousand feet from the glacier at its base, twice the height of Yosemite's El Capitan" (p.134-135). He says that the passions of youth and literal influence from some writers justified him. (p.135) When he was planning to climb, he realized that he might be getting absorbed in it. "That it wouldn't be easy was the whole point" (135). He had both feeling, fear and curiosity, and he was convinced that climbing the Devils Thumb would change his life. He tried a few times to climb the top of the mountain.

In the book, he describes that it was really dangerous and he could die with a mistake. Even when he achieved his goal, which is climbing the peak of the mountain, he didn't feel achievement of his goal. At the time he felt that life and death is a hairsbreadth. He knows how dreadful wilderness is. However, he wrote that "I knew that people sometimes died climbing mountains. But at the age of twenty-three, personal mortality – the idea of my own death – was still largely outside my conceptual grasp" (p.151). McCandless may have thought the same thing as well. Krakauer knows that how the young men who try something dangerous feel about death. Because of that, he doesn't think what McCandless did was stupid.

As I mentioned former paragraph, Krakauer is a mountaineer. He has written his experience which is *"Into the Thin Air"*. It is about climbing the Mount Everest in 1996, May. The real story shocked readers because he achieved the top of the mountain, even though that climbing team had an accident which lots of the team members had been lost in the mountain. He described the story realistically, not exaggerated. He tells the readers how weak human beings are compared to wilderness. He also, has an idea of wilderness and it seems quite similar as McCandless. Krakauer thinks that wilderness is dangerous and strong, but it is beautiful and he likes to feel it. McCandless also might think that wilderness is more special than any other places. Both of them are inspired to wilderness and desire to go there.

Secondly, there is a similar point for their father. Krakauer's father was strict as well as McCandless father is. Also Krakauer's personality was "willful, self-absorbed, intermittently, reckless, and moody" (134) when he was young. He remembers the feeling at that time.

I had been granted unusual freedom and responsibility at an early age, for which I should have been grateful in the extreme, but I wasn't. Instead, I felt oppressed by the old man's expectations. It was drilled into me that anything less than winning was failure. (p.148)



Too much freedom and responsibility for children make them have much pressure. The environment he had and also McCandless had were probably close. Both of the fathers may make effort for the children; however, it didn't work well. Because of the pressure from the father, both of them did what they want to do, instead of following their fathers.

Another similar point is that Krakauer had only small money when he was trying to go to the mountain, and he felt "the world was suddenly rich with possibility" (p.136) when he left his job. They may think that the money doesn't mean anything in wilderness. There are no shops to buy something. They want to have an experience in the wild which means they want to live in the wilderness by themselves. To do it, they didn't need money, they just needed it for minimum required.

While McCandless and Krakauer have similar experience and sense, Krakauer achieved his goal with trying three times, but McCandless died.

In conclusion, Krakauer had a similar experience to McCandless when he was young. Also both of them had dangerous experience in Alaska. What the only difference is die or not. Krakauer survived and McCandless died, or Krakauer could have died and McCandless could have survived. Therefore, he should have felt sympathy and destiny from him. He mentions that he was interested in him because some points of his life events are similar to those in his own (Authors Note). Therefore, he cannot think about McCandless like some people who sent the letters to him. He may know more what McCandless thought and felt than the people who just heard the news.

2-4.

From chapter 2, we can see that McCandless who was written by Krakauer is not a perfectly real person. He is who the author thinks. It must have some differences between the "real McCandless" and "Krakauer's McCandless". We never know how "real McCandless" thought in his life. McCandless could be just like a young man who did the same thing as him and it is usual to be thought that he didn't prepare well and didn't learn about wilderness before he arrived there. For the people who know that there are some men who try to live in wilderness, McCandless was not a special person. He was just one of the stupid men who go to that kind of place because they just got interested in it. To live in the wilderness, everyone can think that it would be difficult and should prepare enough; however, McCandless didn't. It is not unnatural that people who hear the news think that he committed suicide.

However, in Krakauer's point of view, McCandless did what he wanted to do, and it wasn't a mistake. He says that "I won't claim to be an impartial biographer. McCandless's strange tale struck a personal note that made a dispassionate rendering of the tragedy impossible" (Author's Note). Krakauer is a climber and he had a lot of dangerous experience. He thinks wilderness is dangerous and difficult place to live; however, he likes to be in wilderness. He couldn't see McCandless without sympathy. Because of this reason, Krakauer and his book is on McCandless's side.

In the end of this chapter, I put a diary which McCandless wrote during his journey. "It is the experiences, the memories, the great triumphant joy of living to the fullest extent in which real meaning is found. God it's great to be alive! Thank you. Thank you" (p.37). Even if he prepared less, maybe it doesn't matter to

him. He thanked to live and seems to have enjoyed his life.

### 3. How does “wilderness” stand for in America?

McCandless liked to read books. One of his favorite writers is Jack London (1876-1916). Krakauer wrote in his book that “McCandless had been infatuated with London since childhood. London’s fervent condemnation of capitalist society, his glorification of the primordial world, his championing of the great unwashed- all of it mirrored McCandless’s passions.” (p.44) He read several times “*The Call of the Wind*”, “*White Fang*”, “*To Build a Fire*”, “*An Odyssey of the North*” and “*The Wit of Porportuk*”. (p.44) McCandless often read London’s books and he must have really liked the way Jack London thought about wilderness. The letter which was engraved into a chip of wood was found in the bus where McCandless died. “Jack London is King Alexander Supertramp May 1992” (p.9) McCandless seems he respected London and he was inspired his way to think by his books.

Another writer he liked is Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). McCandless surely thought that “*On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*”, which is Thoreau’s essay, published in 1849, is right as his supporter (p.28). Also McCandless was interested in racial oppression in South Africa (p.113). It can see that he had similar thinking way as Thoreau. The book written by Thoreau was found in the bus. In the book “*Walden, or Life in the Woods*”, McCandless underlined the sentences he liked. This is one of them.

No man ever followed his genius till it misled him. Though the result were bodily weakness, yet perhaps no one can say that the consequences were to be regretted, for these were a life in conformity to higher principles. ...The greatest gains and values are farthest from being appreciated. We easily come to doubt if they exist. We soon forget them. They are the highest reality. ... The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched. Henry David Thoreau (p.47)

This may speak for him or it encouraged him that the way of his life wasn’t fault. In addition, Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was also his favorite writer. From McCandless action, “Then, in a gesture that would have done both Thoreau and Tolstoy proud, he arranged all his paper currency in a pile on the sand -a pathetic little stack of ones and fives and twenties- and put a match to it” (p.29). From this part, we can see that McCandless longed for them. McCandless also highlighted some sentences of Tolstoy’s book.

I wanted movement and not a calm course of existence. I wanted excitement and danger and the chance to sacrifice myself for my love. I felt in myself a superabundance of energy which found no outlet in our quiet life. Leo Tolstoy “*Family Happiness*” (p.15)

Besides, their how to think about nature is similar. Thoreau says “How near to good is what is wild!” “Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps” (p.240, 241).

He highlighted many sentences which impressed him. Those sentences tend to be something about wilderness and the meaning of life. The sentences may be what he was feeling in his life.

In eighteenth century, nature was something like appealing thing, “Nature is divine and morally uplifting” (Basil Willey p.64). “Nature has meant the ‘countryside’, the ‘unspoiled places’, plants and creatures other than man” (Raymond Williams p.188). As you read, nature was not only appealed place, but also the place where is no human. It is the place no one touched and no creates.

In nineteenth century, still some people such as Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) thought wild are the best in the world. They felt that there are lots of people, skyscrapers, and products which people create in society. Those things make people’s heart disturbed. Almost all of the things in the cities are unnatural; however, most of people who live there are addicted to the convenient society. On the other hand, wilderness is so natural and pure, like the origin earth. Since some people had this idea, wilderness is the place which doesn’t have people.

It is written that “when people in the nineteenth century spoke of nature, they usually meant nonhuman nature” (George Boas p.6). Also, Emerson wrote in the essay “*Nature*” that “cities give not the human senses room enough....Nature is loved by what is best in us. It is loved as the city of God, although, or rather because there is no citizen” (p.2-5). It shows that how the people in nineteenth century tend to think about nature. From these essays, American people must get the idea that wilderness is pure and great place.

The thoughts about nature is still American mainstream. Most of people in the US think that nature is beautiful place, which is not created by someone. “Primeval forest prompts spirit arousal with power of element because it doesn’t get contaminated by human history” (原始林は、歴史の汚染を受けていないゆえに、元素的力に満ち、霊的覚醒を促すものである) (Sasaki Miyoko, p.3).

As I mentioned this chapter, it can say that American tend to think about nature as a special place. McCandless is also one of the people in the US; therefore, he must have had the idea. If so, it is kind of natural to think about going to wilderness when he wants to leave society. “Wild has nothing with a certain appeal. When McCandless visits Los Angeles to get ID and a job, he felt unpleasant in the state of being with other people (p.37). Also, Debra McKinney, who was one of the people who tried to stay in the wild, said “I was interested in knowing if it was possible to be independent of modern technology,” and “it was his goal to return to a natural state” (p.74). It shows that some of people in twenty century thought about nature as same as eighteen and nineteenth century people did; the wilderness is natural, no creatures, which is better than any other places in the world.

From these point of view, people use to tend to think that nature is spiritual and organic place which is pure. American people think that wilderness is beautiful place, mystical place. It can be a mainstream for American. Instead of creating marketing, economy, and society in the cities, they think there is nothing in the wild. Therefore, that’s good to visit there when you want to feel free, and want to escape from society.

Chris McCandless also must have thought this traditional idea, then decided to aim for wilderness. Of course, going to wilderness is not typical thing to do for American too; however, many of them have the idea.

From this chapter, I can say that McCandless didn’t do something strange. He followed what American people think although he might not have thought that he thinks typical thing. It seems also that he wanted to

follow the authors he likes because they had similar mind as him.

This part is showing how McCandless had same idea as the people in eighteen and nineteen century; “McCandless was stirred by the austerity of this landscape, by its saline beauty. The desert sharpened the sweet ache of his longing, amplified it, gave shape to it in serene geology and clean slant of light” (p.32). He loved the nature as well as them.

#### 4. My point of view

Once I read this book, I thought just he is an adventurer and had his short life heroically because the book is written like so. Also the movie didn't have message for criticizing or not. It gave me just his tale. Because of that, I could see that there are sometimes strange people who try something other people do not do, and the one who did was McCandless. However, I found that some young men do similar things as him. The advanced technology and society makes them (young American men) uncomfortable. They lost where they are and what for they are living there. Technology invented a lot of amazing things, but it makes humans life boring. People do same thing as others do. They cannot see the purpose of life. To find something, to find their meaning of life, some people try to escape from the environment they have right now. The best way to do that was leaving from society, and be alone to find yourself. The place which doesn't have human society is wilderness. You should live by yourself. Time is all for you. You can think about yourself. It may be necessary for this era. From this point, I got that McCandless didn't do special thing. His journey was strange for me; however, there are some people who did similar travel as him. From the book and the movie, which is not made by Chris McCandless though, he seemed that he was somewhat satisfied to have journey which no one do (he think). Some can curse him with bad words, but I don't want to do it. I think his life, his journey was meaningful for him.

One day, it may be when he arrived Alaska and found the bus for living place, he wrote the diary.

Two years he walks the earth. No phone, no pool, no pets, no cigarettes. Ultimate freedom. An extremist. An aesthetic voyager whose home is the road. Escaping 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 a 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. Alexander Supertramp May 1992 (p.163)

At Alaska, he spend a lot of time alone. He must have thought many things. Once, he had tried to cross the river which he crossed to go into the place few months ago; however, it was much more quantity of the river water, so he couldn't get back. “Disaster. ... Rained in. River look impossible. Lonely, scared” (p.170). He wrote in his diary. After spending time in Alaska, he recognized that there are no meaning to live by himself.

When he read Tolstoy's book which is “*Family Happiness*” he wrote this as well.

He was right in saying that the only certain happiness in life is to live for others....

I have lived through much, and now I think found what is needed for happiness. A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbor – such is my idea of happiness. And then, on top of all that, you for a mate, and children, perhaps – what more can the heart of a man desire? (p.169)

His journey was meaningful for him and he eventually found what he wants though he couldn't survive there and couldn't go back to his families. He found what the meaning of life is for him. He stayed alone and did what he wants to do without saying anything to his parents. However, what he finally got is that the happiest life is spending time with people you like. Even though he couldn't get his ideal life, his journey wasn't stupid thing. Many people spend life in society and some of them even don't realize the meaning of life. Instead, McCandless tried to find it. Then, though he couldn't get it, he found something which he needs. He lived with doing what he wants to do and with thinking the meaning of his life.

## 5. Conclusion

Chris McCandless went to Alaska to live in the wilderness. On his journey, he met some people and he wrote his diary. This book, "*Into the Wild*" is written by John Krakauer, and he searched about him and got to know from confess by some people who know about McCandless and from his diary. It is not McCandless's autobiography, so somewhat it is vague how McCandless actually thought and aimed. However, I think I almost could see what he thought when I searched about it.

There are some big reasons. One of them is that he didn't like the life in society. He had some problem with his parents, and he couldn't understand why there are poverty and wealth difference; therefore, he must have wanted to leave from society and from the people in society.

Another reason is American general thoughts about wilderness. Since eighteen century, there are some thoughts and books that wilderness is pure and special place for human beings. The thought is still exist and many people in the US think that wilderness is necessary place for them. McCandless, also, the one who thinks that.

The other reason is simple. He loved wilderness and the life without money. As I quote some places in this thesis, he had enjoyed his life during his journey with no ID and less money. He might be able to feel that he is living.

During his journey, he was seeking something he wanted to know. He wanted to know something in the wilderness. The question was probably this; what for he is living. He didn't commit suicide. He went to Alaska to live and to find what he seeks. He made a list to do which titled "LONG TERM"; "map the area, improvise a bathtub, collect skins and feathers to sew into clothing, construct a bridge across a nearby creek, repair mess kit, blaze a network of hunting trails" (p.166). We can see that he surely planned to live there for a long time.

Eventually, he found what he wanted to know. During his life in Alaska, he felt loneliness. He tried to

leave there, but he couldn't. He had never said something negative but as I quote last chapter, he felt loneliness and finally, he realized that the meaning of life is living for other people. He wrote a memo to part of the book, "*Doctor Zhivago*". Next to this sentences; "and so it turned out that only a life similar to the life of those around us, merging with it without a ripple, is genuine life, and that an unshared happiness is not happiness.... And this was most vexing of all", he wrote "HAPPINESS ONLY REAL WHEN SHARED" (p.189).

Chris McCandless found the meaning of his life even though he couldn't leave wilderness in safe. His life, his journey was great to get to know what he wanted to know.

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