# Into The Wild: Book Versus Movie

Into The wild is a non-fictional novel based on a true story by John Krakauer. It was later adapted into a movie directed by Sean Penn. Both the movie and the novel are based on the story of the American adventurer Christopher Johnson McCandless who gives up his luxurious life to delve into the life of spiritual enlightenment and self-discovery.

The novel was released in 1996. It recites the story of Christopher McCandless. After graduating from university, McCandless a top A student and athlete who comes from a rich family, and instead of becoming a productive member of society, he leaves all of these luxuries behind, donates his money to charity, becomes a nomad and goes on a journey from his home in Georgia to Alaska to live in the wilderness. H dies at the age of 24 all alone surrounded by nature only. McCandless's adventures are due to his disagreements with the government, world hunger, inequality and inspirational writers like the Romantic poet Lord Byron.

The movie was introduced and premiered during the 2007 Rome Film Festival. It is an American production, written, co-produced and directed by Sean Penn. Music composed by Eddie Vedder, Michael Brook, and Kaki King. Starring Emile Hirsch as McCandless, Marcia Fay Harden as his mother, William Hurt as his father along with features like; Jenna Malone, Catherine Keener, Vince Vaughn, Kristen Stewart, and Hal Holbrook, characters he encounters throughout his journey that help shape his life. The movie was nominated for Academy awards: Best Editing, and Best Supporting actor for Hal Brook. It was also nominated for two Golden Globes: it won the award for Best Original Song "Guaranteed" by Eddie Vedder. It also won Gotham Independent Film Award for Best Feature Film.

There are no huge differences between the novel and the movie. Both are very well written and they both portray manifold of emotions throughout McCandless's journey. Both share the same beliefs on different topics like the world hunger and other global issues through Chris's philosophy. However, the idea of equality is tackled in both the movie and the novel in a different way. Also the novel describes McCandless's school life in full details and how his philosophy developed throughout it. It describes his fascination with the racial discrimination crisis, and hunger-stricken countries, and how he constantly questions how in today's society people could go hungry. The movie does not indulge into McCandless's life, it only shows bits and pieces from early events that helped shape his life. There are slight differences between Chris McCandless in the novel and Chris McCandless the movie. In the novel, McCandless is quite intelligent and philosophical, however, in the movie, McCandless is slightly foolish.

Something that makes the movie slightly superior to the novel is that Sean Penn uses elements of movie language to visualize his story in a deep and simple way. McCandless does not talk much whenever he is in the presence of nature, it makes it seem as if he and nature are one. The audience connects with McCandless and get what he feels through his facial expressions combined with the visual effects and the beautiful music which makes the scene magical.

In the movie, McCandless's story is narrated through both Chris and his sister, Karen who understands his need for freedom. Meanwhile in the book, the story is narrated through McCandless and John Krakauer as he, himself, was a mountain climber, who tried to climb

mount Everest and faced some of the hardships McCandless witnessed. There is even a part in the novel where he tells his own story to show that he fully understands McCandless. He says in one of his interviews that McCandless's story struck a personal nerve, he says "I was young and reckless, and I did a similarly stupid trip to Alaska. Very serious climb, a major solo expedition to climb a mountain called the Devil's thumb, and I was very lucky I survived. People say he was out to kill himself. I strongly feel that he wasn't."

There are many elements used in the movie to present McCandless's journey, his isolation, and the trouble he faces throughout his journey in a way that makes the audience live every moment of the journey with him. To illustrate, the use of trucks throughout the movie portray both progress and change, the two things the movie depends on. Juxtaposition is used with McCandless vs nature shots to suggest that a life of solitude is coming. Shots of nature while McCandless's journey starts to turn into a struggle against mother nature, like the scene where McCandless kills a buffalo and after eating it he starts feeling guilty and realizes the terrible mistake he has committed. There was a scene where Chris is crying in happiness while watching a pack of deer passing by, this scene shows McCandless's love, respect and empathy for nature and its creatures. As a result, people sympathize with Chris in the deer scene because they realize how bad his situation has gotten.

Both the movie and the novel got good reviews. One of the reviews on the novel "It's a chilling read and one that can't be put down, but it may not be appropriate for sensitive teen readers or any teens without the maturity to see past the adventure." (Gelman, n.d.).

John P. Sisk is Professor of English Emeritus at Gonzaga University, voices his opinion on the novel saying that "what really makes this well-written book, which began as an article in Outside magazine, is the story of how Krakauer got it. He had the advantage of Chris' letters to friends, as well as his journals and the many photographs that were found with the body in the abandoned bus. Interviews with Chris' parents and sister and the people with whom he came into contact along the way have made possible a skillful reconstruction of the young man's effort to reinvent his life." Furthermore, The New York Times also published a review on the novel saying "Mr. Krakauer has taken the tale of a kook who went into the woods, and made of it a heart-rending drama of human yearning."

On the other hand, the movie got 8.1/10 on IMDB, and 82% on Rotten Tomatoes. Dan Jolin gave a positive review on the movie saying "There may be moments when you will want Penn to pick up speed, where you scoff at McCandless' naivety or become tempted to write off Into The Wild as yet another American love letter to the Big Country that they're rapidly shrinking, but come the crucial revelation, you'll find it impossible not to be profoundly affected."

Lastly, both the movie and the novel are extremely engrossing, and thought provoking. They both make you sit down and rethink your life, decisions, goals, dreams and everything. One gets into the movie from the beginning, and lives everything with McCandless. Although, one thinks what McCandless did was quite rash as he was completely unprepared for a dangerous adventure like that, and the fact that he underestimated mother nature, one enjoyed the parts when he was delighted in his surroundings while relishing in nature and the sense of liberation, savoring the solitude, the freedom to do as he pleased. Also when he was frolicking in the river all alone without anyone making demands of him, no wars, no social standards, nothing just him and mother nature. one believes both the movie and the novel tackle the idea that one should find balance in life and not going to extremes, finding that center that defines the best of

humanity.