Themes In The Book Into The Wild

Into the wild is a book that centers around the story of Chris McCandless otherwise known as Alexander Supertramp, who leaves home for his dream adventure of going to Alaska and living on his own. A theme in the book is the theme of self-independence. In Psychology Today, a post talked about how self-independence could set unrealistic goals in oneself and overlook the possible benefits we can get from others. It can be inferred that self-independence is being able to express yourself the way you want it uninfluenced by others' thinking. Self-Independence is a major theme in the book that Alex himself embodies and lives by.

Chapter 1 of Into the Wild introduces the Character Alex, and his dream of a life in the Alaskan wilderness. As the chapter goes on Alex it as to how Alex left home in a way to live his dream, picking up a ride from a stager's car just to get to the Alaskan wilderness. This chapter revealed traits of self-independence since this is the chapter that reveals how Alex did run away from home which in itself is self-independence, due to the fact of how Alex believed that he could live on his own in the wilderness. Furthermore, Alex kept insisting on rejecting the items that Jim Gallen had offered his knowing he was ill-prepared until Alex gave it but this is still an instance of self-reliance. Chapter 2 unveiled the fact that Alex did die. His body is discovered by hunters near an abandoned bus, containing a letter that inside was an SOS note where the name Chris McCandles was inscribed. This chapter revealed self-independence more as an example of what it could lead to. The reader from the previous chapter knew how Chris was ill-prepared to survive leading to his death all forthcoming from his overconfidence in himself to survive the wilderness alone which in itself was his own belief of self-reliance to keep him alive throughout the cold Alaskan WIlderness.

While chapters 1 and 2 questioned what Alec had done throughout his life chapter 3 takes a step back and introduces a man, Wayne Westberg who knew Alex and spoke about him. As anecdotes pass by form Westberg about how Alex had lived his life, previously before he had chosen to go to his travel to Alaska. Alex was well off and his parents both offered and gave him many things. Though an instance of self-reliance that can be perceived, was when Alex's parents offered to buy him a new car. Though Alex believed that the car that he was able to buy himself a Dustin was enough for him. This also reveals self -independent since he firmly believed that what he had bought was enough for his and did not need to accept a gift from his parents. Additionally Alex, near the end of the chapter "Adopted a new name. No longer would he answer to Chris McCandles; he was now Alexander Supertramp, master of his own destiny" (Krakauer 23). This reveals Alex's unencumbered from his own name since he simply changed it not wanting the name that his parents gave him. In his sheer belief that he himself is enough to keep him sustained. Likewise, chapter 4 describes the travels of Alex, as he goes around North America. Traveling to Vegas, California, and even paddling to Mexico and back almost dying in the process. Alex express " It is the experience, the memories, the great triumphant joy of living to the fullest in which real meaning is found" (Krakauer 37). This indicates how Alex was doing what he was doing for the experience he would have built. Alex wanted to experience life in a new way in a way only he is able to do which in turn is self-reliance.

Chapter 5 expresses how Chris started to struggle, he needed money. Instead of asking people for the money he chose to work at Mcdonalds, where he eventually quit for being asked

questions. Though he then went to another the slab where he displayed his love for certain books. The stories he had told people in the book are stories about him being able to “paddle a canoe to Mexico, hot to hop freight trains, how to score a bed at the inner-city mission” (Karauker 46). This also informs us how Alex was able to learn on this on his own without the need for help from other people which is self-independence. Though chapter 6 changes things a little bit. Chapter 6 generally dealt with Ron, and an 80-year-old man who wanted to take Alex in, as well as Alex, changing his way of living. Alex stated in the chapter “ Don’t hesitate or allow yourself to make excuses, just get out and do it. Just get out and do it. You will be very, very glad that you did” (Krakauer 58). This gave the old man who had lived anachronistic life even though he had adjusted to how things are now, changes his life to the way Chris wanted him to live. Leading Ron to a more self-independent type of life, since he slowly started to live like Chris who was already self-independent.

Chapter 7 picks up 50 days after the body of Alex was found. Westberg remembering the time he had spent with Alex in Carthage. Though he was a simple hard worker, Westberg became interested in the man. He saw Alex as an independent man who he saw as a smart person who even he invited to his home. Mrs. Westerg thought Alex found out that he, in fact, was smart being able to play the piano and having long conversations. Alex in a way revealed his self-reliance and independence while he did not want to task for help he would have rather work than to accept gifts from people. Even refusing to ask for help in machines that he did not know how to use. Chapter 8 examines the letters that Krakauer received in writing the book. Further, in the chapter, Krakauer identifies Alex’s tragedy paralleling between 3 other people, Waterman, Carl, and Rosellini. These 3 people had a similar life of Alex since they had al presumed to have died in the wilderness, believing themselves similarly to Alex. This revealed the theme since all of them were different versions of Alex. They all wanted to live in their own world, away from society a paucity of people who do not only want to be away from the world that everyone lives in a world where they only need themselves. Though from the previous chapters it is known that too much reliance on self, independence in self could have bad repercussions. Chapter 9 further builds upon the idea that it wasn’t just Alex who wanted to be alone and sufficiently keep himself alive. The Chapter starts with a different character David Gulch. He similarly to Alex wanted to live a life of solitude the wilderness. Furthermore, before he indulged in life in the wild, he had an upper-middle-class life where he did not need to struggle for many things he needs in life. Gulch loved the wilderness and lived within it, but he failed to show up in Marble Canyon presumably died and disappeared. This related to self-independence since it talked about how both he and Alex wanted to live a life of solitude where they had to rely solely on themselves, though ending in a failure leading to both of their deaths.

There are little traces of self-independence in chapter 10. Since the chapter revolves around people discovering properly identifying Alex’s body. Jim Gallien being one of the people to respond and try to identify the body with his pseudonym, but with no evidence, it was hard to prove. The chapter also recollects on Way Westerbg being able to identify the body of Alex due to his social security number as well as a physical description. While this chapter provides context as to how Alex’s body got discovered not much is shown regarding self-independence

While chapter 10 revolves around cortex on who found the body, chapters 11, 12 and 13 revolved around how Alex performed as a child and how his family reacts to his death. Chapter 11 gave context on what Alex’s father was like, having an incorrigible will. That chapter additionally goes in-depth with how Alex grew up as a child. Alex was in the text was a very smart and promising child, never wanting to follow the rules and making his own. The text also

stated, “Chris has such an outstanding knack for selling that in the spring of 1986, as Chris’s high school graduation approached, ...school instead of quitting his job and going off to Emory” (Krakauer 116). This already manifested the theme in a way that was conjoined as to how Alex’s mentality as a child was like. Alex wanted to make his own money or become self-independent, not requiring the help of his parents to make money. As highschool ended he even make the code to work 1st before going to a college since that was what he wanted, along with the fact that he was seen as a very good salesman who was charismatic and very charming. Chapter 12 moreover describes the time Alex gifted his father a telescope along with his father calling him out on how being too proficient in many things could lead to a rough path in the future. This made Alex get overconfident in his abilities to do anything going on many trips even when his parents do not want him to he still tries to go, as well as growing cold to his own friends. Alex also started to grow frustrated with his parents being concerned for him due to his coldness towards his friends and parents. This released his self-independence in a way as well as his self-reliance since in a way Alex sees himself as enough to satisfy his needs. Not needing close friends to emotionally keep him active, at the same time not having an intimate relationship sort of revealed how self-reliant Alex is which reflects the theme of the book. While the next chapter takes a break from the life of Alex and moves to his family. Chapter 13 in the majority talks about how Alex’s parents and sister reacted to his death. His sister and mother became anorexic while his father started gaining weight and eating due to the stress, and loss of his child. There are only small traces of self-independence in this chapter, since the way they cope with their problems are sort of in their own way, especially since the father did something ironic and chose to eat away at his sorrow and sadness. In a way his parents dealt with their own demons was in a way self-independent. Especially since the way the father dealt with his problems since he knew that his child had died from starvation yet he kept eating to cope with it as well as Alex’s mother and sister both starved themselves. Both the parents and sister show self-independence by choosing their way to cope with the death of Alex, though not a lot of self-independence can be seen in this chapter there are still traces of it.

Chapters 14 and 15 are pretty much intertwined in the fact the 2 chapters connect the author Krakauer, and Alex and similarities to how they both lived. Krakauer in these 2 chapters describes his adventure of repeatedly trying to climb the Devil's Thumb by himself, living in a tent going ill-prepared at times but repeatedly failing. Furthermore, similarly to Alex, he had a rough relationship with his father who gets addicted to his own medication. But as the story concludes he decided to climb the Devil's Thumb once again, but this time Krakauer decide to climb it from the North-East face. Before Krakauer climbs the mountain he tried again with less gear than before, going in ill-prepared but in the end, he succeeded and go to the top. Though unlike Alex he was able to survive and live another day. This is a clear indication of self-independence since Krakauer was so similar to Alex. Both of them were similar in a way that they both chose to undertake a life in the wilderness and with their own strength to do something that is just unheard of to do alone. Krakauer chose to climb the Devil's Thumb by himself with his own gear, and close to the end of his story he proceeded to go climb the mountain by himself, without his gear which is his own self-independence even when he knows what normally a person shouldn’t climb it alone. Krakauer doesn’t let the voice of other people dictate how he would or should have climbed the mountain in a way, expressing himself in his own interest which was at the time not using gear to accomplish the climb.

Chapter 16 starts off as Alex left Carthage and crossed the Candian border trying to get to Alaska. He was offered a ride by Gaylord Stuckey who had an RV, he then bought a 1 pound bag of rice and headed towards Alaska, though he was told by Stucky that he was

underprepared to survive in the wilderness. Though Alex still prospered in the wild residing upon a bus after crossing a frozen-over river the Teklanika River. He then started hunting and eating berries at a point even killing a moose though he failed to reserve it, throw it out to the wolves. Though near the end of the chapter Alex tries to leave the wilderness, though as he arrived at the Teklanika River water has defrosted preventing him from leaving, so he went back to the bus and stayed there till he had a plan. An instance in this chapter that reveals self-independence was him choosing to live in Alaska itself. This chapter reveals just how much Alex believed in himself. He was told again and again that he was underrated but he still chose, Alex embodies self-reliance and firmly believed that he could live in the wildernesses and provide for himself, though he did once he tried to leave he couldn't sense it was blocked off which was in a way a fault of his too much belief in himself. Chapter 17 in a way presented that maybe Alex wasn't the smartest just the fact that Karauker chose to go to the same place that Alex had gone to. Though unlike Alex he bought people with him that are prepared and experienced. Krakauer also revealed how there was a way for Alex to cross the river, he just needed to keep looking for the wire crossing. Alex could have also looked for the cottages around the park where they could have helped Alex. Though the author talks about what could have caused the death of Alex. Alex had a list of berries that he had been eating as well as information on the moose that he had killed, though it wasn't, in fact, a moose but a caribou. Though from the information they have seen from his messages it seemed like he could have survived for a longer time than he did. This chapter in a way reveals the repercussions of the self-independence that Alex embodies. He believed too much in himself that he, one way or another caused his own death by being too ill-prepared to do anything or to even know the animal he has killed. Alex could as well have just been ignorant with what he had been doing, simply because of the miss identification of the moose and the berries that he had been eating, all stemming from the self-independence that he had been yearning for. Chapter 18 puts an end to the story and concludes everything. In this chapter Alex knew that he was dying, possibly from berries that he had eaten that caused him to grow weak and slowly lose energy to the point where he had to choice but to be bedridden and slowly died from hunger. But as the chapter progresses we can clearly see Alex's emotional transition from panic due to his SOS note, and his feeling of acceptance from his note when he said that he had lived a happy life. What we can take from this chapter that relates to self-independence, is while yes he achieved his goal, he accepted his demise and died happily. The amount of self-independent he had in himself was the main cause of his demise, he was simply too prideful and didn't let anyone alter his choice since everything was building up to this point and he simply discovered that he had made a mistake in his own choice. Though he had accepted the fact that he made a wog decides and accepted his death, nonetheless his own self-independence is what caused him to die.

In conclusion, the book Into the Wild revealed the life of Alex through the many chapters that covered both his life and the lives of those he had affected. The author revealing a theme in the book that is prevalent in most but not a chapter, the theme of self-independence. Though in the book Alex Supertramp was a human embodiment of self-independence and lived by it, though every breath that he takes and every place that he goes.