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My Weird Life

Christopher McCandless took a rare and unorthodox decision that would be the result of his untimely demise. A recent college graduate from one of the best universities in the country, McCandless had almost everything that most young people desire: wealthy family and a bright future ahead of him. Yet, he abandoned all that and took a giant, and bold step that changed his life and the lives of those around him. McCandless left his apparently comfortable life and set out to live in the wilderness, despite his inexperience and relative lack of knowledge about life in the forests.

Shaun Callarman opines that McCandless was not bold or brave, and he lacked common sense. He bases his argument on the fact that McCandless died very early into his “settlement” in nature because he was not prepared to face the dangers and realities of life in the wild. Callarman does agree that McCandless was a bright young man whose ideals set him apart from the rest of the people in his age group. Yet, his unpreparedness and his lack of planning convinces Callarman that he was at the end of the day, just a crazy person with some unusual ideas. I disagree with Callarman because McCandless was a brave and bold soul who had the courage to live the life he wanted.

Callarman has based his argument on the notion that McCandless set out to live a long and materially prosperous life. The premise of the aforementioned argument is flawed as it is unclear what McCandless’ long-term goals were. McCandless states, *“I don’t want to know what day it is or where I am. None of that matters”* (Jon Krakauer 7). This clearly shows that McCandless had found happiness in the short-term and this was his way of achieving happiness. It is clear from the aforementioned quote alone that McCandless did not plan ahead. While this may seem ‘crazy’ to some people, after a brainstorming exercise, it is my belief that this was simply another element of McCandless ideals about life in the wild. He must have believed that the beauty of life lies in the unexpected - in terms of time. Since, no one knows how long they have to live, McCandless must have thought that he should live in the wild, where misfortune and even death would not come as a surprise.

The element of unpreparedness was another component of his ideals about life. He believed that the life can only be enjoyed to its fullest extent when people are unprepared for what’s about to come. His sense of adventure can be witnessed in the following quotes from ‘Into The Wild’, *“If you want to get more out of life…you must lose your inclination for monotonous society and adopt a helter-skelter style of life that will at first appear to you as crazy”, and “We just have to have the courage to turn against our habitual lifestyle and engage in unconventional living”* (Into The Wild, 57). This explains McCandless’ desire for adventure and his longing for a life that is not normal and conventionally conservative. He yearned for a unique lifestyle that would be free of the societal constraints that bind us all. He was brave in his understanding that humans cannot live a life of peace and tranquility unless they detach themselves from the material world and experience the wilderness with little preparation. The idea may sound absurd to some people but the foundation of McCandless’ belief is brave in its entirety. He is not afraid to take the step that most would not have the stomach to take, even if they wanted to. Thus, I disagree with Callarman that McCandless was just a crazy person with little planning.

McCandless was nomadic from heart yet he was living in an urbanized society with a very stable and static characteristic. McCandless epitomizes this adventurous tendency by leaving everything behind to attempt to live by himself in the wilderness of the jungle. This inclination towards a life of wandering can be judged when the author says about McCandless’ thoughts, *“The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is not greater joy that to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun”* (Into The Wild, 57)*.* Once again, it cannot be said that McCandless was crazy for attempting to live the kind of life he wanted rather than the life everyone wanted for him. It was simply a bold move on his part to leave all of his belongings and wander off into Alaska without so much as a map. His boldness inspires many people but confounds others like Callarman who fail to understand McCandless’ nature and mindset.

Moreover, Callarman represents the people who are somewhat limited by their imagination and perceive anything out of the ordinary as ‘crazy’. Every person in the world desires happiness and craves to achieve it, no matter the cost. For most people, happiness would be finding a stable job, with a bright future ahead. However, McCandless’ idea about happiness was unpredictability and connecting with nature. He characterizes this feeling in a note he left in the bus in which his body was found. The note read, *“I have found a happy life and thank the Lord. Goodbye and may God bless all!”* (Into The Wild, 199). This clearly shows that McCandless found what he had set out to find, as crazy as it might seem to most people. If anyone does something they like and get satisfaction out of it without committing any crime, people should not call them crazy if they are incapable of understanding their perspective.

Therefore, it can be seen clearly that McCandless achieved happiness and satisfaction from his journey to Alaska. Despite the fact that his life was cut short because of the journey, he lived his days in happiness, knowing he had succeeded. His ambition is only outmatched by his boldness to pursue his dream, rather than waste his life trying to fit into a society that would not understand his perspective. So, Callarman is wrong in his analysis that McCandless was crazy. On the country, he was brave, bold and knew what he wanted out of life. Finally, he had the guts to achieve his goal and defy the world’s narrow understanding of life.

Works Cited

Krakauer, Jon. Into the Wild. Villard, 1996