Chris’s acceptance of working at McDonald’s indicates to the reader that Chris has an inner desire to settle down and abandon his vagrant lifestyle. According to Krakauer, when “[Chris] arrive[s] in Bullhead City, [he] stop[s] moving for more than two months” (Krakauer 39) showing that the sedentary lifestyle Chris grew up with still appeals to him. McCandless confirms this notion when he writes, “‘… I might finally settle down and abandon my tramping life, for good” (Krakauer 39). At the same time, his colleagues’ recounted experiences of working with Chris demonstrate that he still espouses his views of living in harmony with nature. McCandless’s co-workers describe Chris as “a nice kid and a good worker” (Krakauer 40) who is also “homeless, and [shows] up for work smelling bad” (Krakauer 41). Thus, despite Chris’s desire to jettison his itinerant ways, he continues to believe in living in nature and is homeless.

In “Anza-Borrego,” the relationship between Ronald Franz and Chris closely resembles that between grandfather and grandson. Franz is an eighty-year-old former soldier who became an alcoholic after his wife and son died in a car accident and “never really got over the loss” (Krakauer 50). Franz is in need of a grandson figure who he can take care of and nurture and who will replace Franz’s deceased son, as indicated by Krakauer’s writing “[Franz’s] long-dormant paternal impulses [are] kindled anew” (50) when he meets Chris. Chris, on the other hand, needs someone he can converse and interact with while he bides his time in Salton City, as evidenced by the fact that Chris regularly visits Franz and teaches him about the benefits of an itinerant lifestyle. Chris’s behavior indicates that he truly believes in living with nature and wants to convert people to follow his peripatetic way of life.

In “Bullhead City,” Krakauer opines that Chris’s infatuation with Jack London is foolish. According to the author, “London’s fervent condemnation of capitalist society, his glorification of the primordial world, [and] his championing of the great unwashed” (Krakauer 44) all appeal to Chris and inspire him to roam the United States. However, Krakauer dismisses London’s works as “works of fiction, constructions of the imagination that had more to do with London’s romantic sensibilities than with the actualities of life in the subarctic wilderness” (44). Krakauer also notes that London “spent just a single winter in the North” (44) and is therefore unqualified to discuss the merits of living in the wilderness. Thus, Krakauer believes that Chris’s obsession with London is misguided. I agree with Krakauer’s assessment of Chris as I think that Chris takes London’s novels too seriously and romantically envisions himself in the books, failing to take into account that London has little experience living in the wilderness. In short, Chris is detached from reality.