Who was the greatest influence on Alexander Supertramp?

Krakauer makes it clear in his book that Christopher McCandless was deeply influenced by a variety of writers, including Jack London, Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Leo Tolstoy, among others. Selected passages from relevant texts by Thoreau, Emerson, and Tolstoy are in the Blackboard shell for this class.

For your second essay, please write a three- to four-page essay in which you answer the following question: Which of the three authors, Thoreau, Emerson, and Tolstoy, do you think had the greatest impact on Chris McCandless and why? In other words, which of these authors most influenced the choices he made in his life and why? To what extent and how did they influence his approach to life, his world view, what you might even call his philosophy of life?

You must only choose ONE of these three authors as the primary influence, although you may point out the extent to which the other author’s influenced aspects of his life. You will also want to tackle the question of Chris’s alter-ego, Alexander Supertramp. Who was Alex? Was Alex a different “character” than Christopher? Why did Chris adopt the character of Alexander Supertramp? What function did his alter-ego perform for Chris? In what ways are Alex and Chris different? In what ways are they similar?

Do not use outside sources to write this essay. Use only Krakauer’s book, the readings provided to you in the Blackboard shell, and your class notes.

A few parameters for your paper:

- Your essay must include an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement; supporting body paragraphs; and a conclusion.
- **Do not use first person in writing this essay.** Since this is an expository or analytical paper, you may not use the first-person pronoun “I.” You must write the paper in the third person. For example, avoid any first-person stories or narratives. Don’t use phrases such as “I think,” “I feel,” “It seems to me,” “In my opinion,” or “In this paper, I will show,” none of which are acceptable in formal academic writing.
Your essay should be typed and double-spaced in Times-New Roman 12 point font with 1-inch margins. Please put your name and the assignment number in the upper left-hand corner of your paper. Please also staple the pages of your paper.

You may not use any outside sources to write this essay with the exception of our primary source, Jon Krakauer’s book, *Into the Wild*, the selected texts in the Blackboard shell, and your class notes.

Your paper must include a Works Cited Page. You must cite your quotations or paraphrases in MLA (Modern Language Association) format. We have reviewed MLA citation methods in class, but here is a quick refresher course:

**MLA (Modern Language Association) Citation Format**

When writing a paper for English or other humanities class, you must use MLA Citation Format. Here is an example of a sentence which uses a quotation from Sarah Vowell.

After the break-up with her boyfriend, Sarah Vowell realizes that music has become a religion for her. For example, she describes the music of Elvis in an almost mystical way. Vowell writes, “An Elvis song coming out of the radio wasn’t a sign of God to him, it was just another one of those corny pop tunes he could live without” (Vowell 169). Vowell is upset to learn that her boyfriend does not hear Elvis in the same way she does. While for her the song is a sign that fate has brought them together, he hears nothing but a “corny pop tune.”

When using a **direct quotation**, always do the following:

1. **Introduce the quotation and explain its context.** Here, for example, the writer introduces the quotations with the phrase “Vowell writes…”
2. **Briefly explain and analyze the quotation.** Every quotation that you use should be followed by at least two sentences of explanation and analysis. This analysis should explain how the quotation supports the thesis of the paper.
3. **Cite your source.** When using a book with one author, you must include the last name of the author and the page number of the quotation. In this example, the citation is (Vowell 169).

- You must also include a **Works Cited page** with your paper. This page comes **after** the last page of your paper; it is a separate page all to itself. In this case of this essay, which uses only our primary text and that handout as your source, your Works Cited page will look like this:

  Works Cited