

Hemingway Code Hero



HEMINGWAY CODE: Hemingway's protagonists are usually "Hemingway Code Heroes," i.e., figures who try to follow a hyper-masculine moral code and make sense of the world through those beliefs. Hemingway himself defined the Code Hero as "a man who lives correctly, following the ideals of honor, courage and endurance in a world that is sometimes chaotic, often stressful, and always painful." This code typically involves several traits for the Code Hero:

- (1) Measuring himself against the difficulties life throws in his way, realizing that we will all lose ultimately because we are mortals, but playing the game honestly and passionately in spite of that knowledge
- (2) Facing death with dignity, enduring physical and emotional pain in silence
- (3) Never showing emotions
- (4) Maintaining free-will and individualism, never weakly allowing commitment to a single woman or social convention to prevent adventure, travel, and acts of bravery
- (5) Being completely honest, keeping one's word or promise

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(6) Being courageous and brave, daring to travel and have “beautiful adventures,” as Hemingway would phrase it

(7) Admitting the truth of Nada (Spanish, “nothing”), i.e., that no external source outside of oneself can provide meaning or purpose. This existential awareness also involves facing death without hope of an afterlife, which the Hemingway Code Hero considers more brave than “cowering” behind false religious hopes.

The Hemingway Code Hero typically has some sort of physical or psychological wound symbolizing his tragic flaw or the weaknesses of his character, which must be overcome before he can prove his manhood (or re-prove it, since the struggle to be honest and brave is a continual one). Also, many Hemingway Code Heroes suffer from a fear of the dark, which represents the transience or meaninglessness of life in the face of eventual and permanent death.