

**Ernest Hemingway,
WWI,
and
The Lost Generation**

Hemingway – the Early Years



- ❖ Born 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois
- ❖ Comfortable Childhood
- ❖ Middle Class Family
- ❖ Father was a doctor, mother was a music enthusiast.

Hemingway – the Early Years

- ❖ After high school (1914), attempted to enlist in the army
- ❖ Rejected on account of bad eye sight
- ❖ Became a “cub reporter” for the *Kansas City Star*



Hemingway – WWI



- ❖ In 1917 entered WWI
- ❖ Enlisted in the Italian Army as an ambulance driver
- ❖ Critically wounded in the leg while serving on the Italian front

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Hemingway – WWI

- ❖ Fall of 1918 spent at Red Cross hospital in Milan
- ❖ Rumors of romantic relationship with his nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky
- ❖ Returned to Italian front by the spring



Hemingway – WWI

- ❖ While rescuing an Italian soldier, wounded by German mortar
- ❖ Over 270 pieces of shrapnel pierced his leg
- ❖ Returned to the States as a decorated war hero, but lived a restless, disillusioned life



The Lost Generation

- ❖ The Generation of 1914 (WWI Generation) is often referred to as the Lost Generation
- ❖ Men and women volunteered to fight a war – the “Great War,” the “War to End All Wars”
- ❖ War promised glory and honor



The Lost Generation

- ❖ Past wars were Romantic: hand-to-hand combat, man vs. man
- ❖ Survival was determined by the strength of the individual
- ❖ WWI destroyed these ideals



The Lost Generation

- ❖ Trench warfare, mortars, grenades, and poison gas replaced the traditional modes of fighting
- ❖ Soldiers rarely saw their enemy
- ❖ Many killed without a chance to fight
- ❖ Strength of the individual became meaningless



The Lost Generation

- ❖ Faith in God was called into question
- ❖ Prayers served no use
- ❖ Men died without warning
- ❖ Shell-shock (PTSS) was the legacy of the survivors



The Lost Generation

- ❖ Nothing held meaning for these survivors
- ❖ Belief in themselves failed them
- ❖ Belief in God failed them
- ❖ They led disillusioned lives



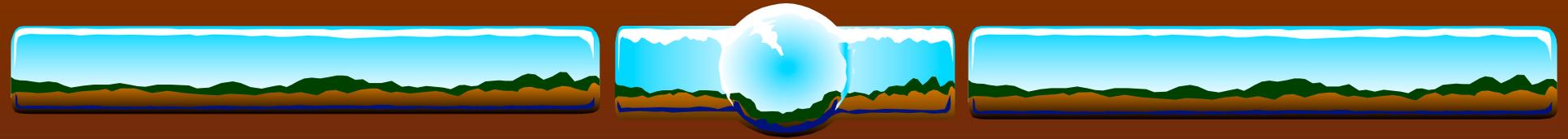
The Lost Generation

- ❖ Hemingway belonged to this generation
- ❖ They led restless lives in search of anything meaningful
- ❖ They often succumbed to drugs or alcohol to escape their depression, or sought out adventures to give life some temporary meaning



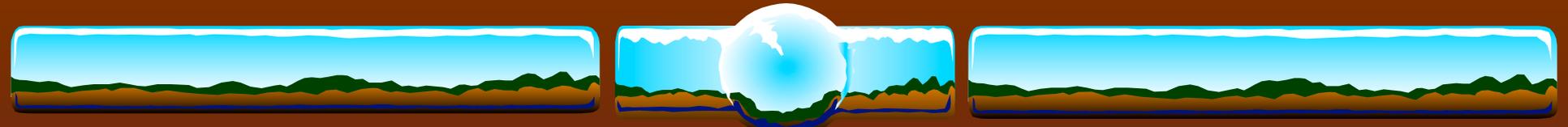
The Lost Generation

- ❖ Hemingway created the Code Hero to represent these men
- ❖ Most of Hemingway's novels and stories focus on the Code Hero's attempt to find meaning in a meaningless world

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The Code Hero

- ❖ Hemingway focused his novels around code heroes who struggle with the mixture of their tragic faults and their surrounding environment.

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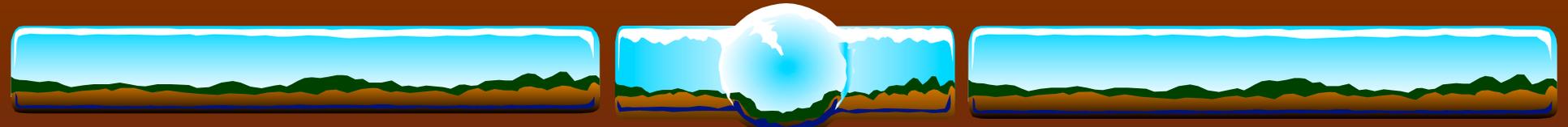
The Code Hero

- ❖ Traits of a typical Hemingway Code Hero are a love of good times, stimulating surroundings, and strict moral rules, including honesty.
- ❖ The Code Hero always exhibits some form of physical wound that serves as his tragic flaw and the weakness of his character.

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The Code Hero

- ❖ Hemingway 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."



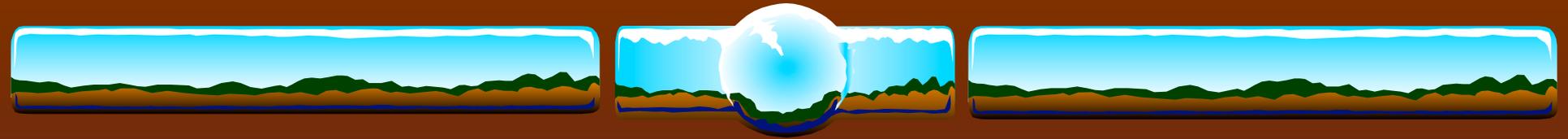
The Code Hero

- ❖ The Code Hero measures himself by how well he handles the difficult situations that life throws at him.
- ❖ In the end the Code Hero will always lose because we are all mortal, but the true measure is how he faces death.



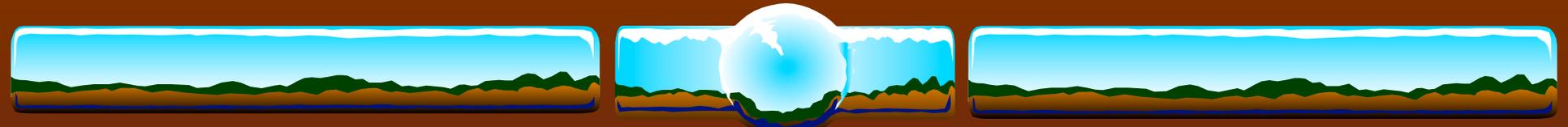
The Code Hero

- ❖ The Code Hero believes in "Nada," a Spanish word meaning nothing.
- ❖ The Nada Principle questions the existence of an afterlife – Death will bring utter darkness.
- ❖ If there is no life after death, then life becomes meaningless.
- ❖ *Nihilism* – complete rejection of established morality & religion



The Code Hero

- ❖ The Code Hero is typically individualistic and free-willed.
- ❖ Although he believes in the ideals of courage and honor, he has his own set of morals and principles based on his beliefs in honor, courage and endurance.



The Code Hero

- ❖ A Code Hero never shows emotions; showing emotions and having a commitment to women shows weakness.
- ❖ Qualities such as bravery, adventurousness, and love for travel also define the Code Hero.



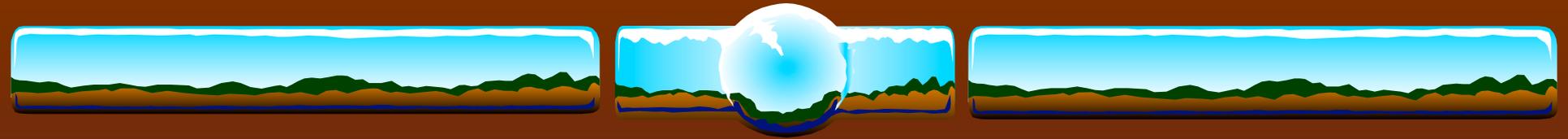
The Code Hero

- ❖ A final trait of the Code Hero is his dislike of the dark. It symbolizes death and is a source of fear for him (Nada Principle).



The Code Hero

- ❖ The rite of manhood for the Code Hero is facing death.
- ❖ However, once he faces death bravely and becomes a man, he must continue the struggle, constantly proving himself in order to retain his manhood.



Notes

- ❖ “Code” + “Hero”
- ❖ Nada
- ❖ Honor
- ❖ Death
- ❖ Morality
- ❖ Emotion