

Let's Begin:

How can an anti-hero teach us about the heroic--and sometimes, the unheroic--characteristics that shape a story's protagonist? From jealousy to self-doubt, Tim Adams challenges us to consider how anti-heroes reflect the very mortal weaknesses that can be found within all of us.

1. Literary critic Northrop Frye said, "In our primitive days, our literary heroes were...
 - A. ...nearly gods."
 - B. ...merely symbolic."
 - C. ...always male."
 - D. ...unlikely candidates."
2. Our ancestors calmed our fears of powerlessness by giving us heroes to defeat the monsters that lived outside of ourselves. What does Adams say is the contemporary storytellers' message?
 - A. We must overcome the monsters that are not outside of us but within us.
 - B. The notion of monsters is a primitive one and should be disregarded in literature.
 - C. The monsters that lie outside of ourselves have become more numerous and too difficult to defeat.
 - D. The only person we can trust is ourselves--everyone else is a monster.
3. The anti-hero:
 - A. At best exhibits a few underdeveloped traits. At worst, the anti-hero is totally inept.
 - B. Brainwashes the populous to believe that the ills of society have been eliminated.
 - C. Is wise, confident, brave, and exhibits the kind of charisma that inspires followers.
 - D. Is always universally disliked.
4. Which is true about the anti-hero?
 - A. The anti-hero is the villain.
 - B. The anti-hero is the antagonist.
 - C. The anti-hero is often the protagonist.
 - D. The anti-hero is always evil.
5. Which does the anti-hero usually do?
 - A. The anti-hero initially conforms to society.
 - B. The anti-hero starts to object and finds others to voice his questions.
 - C. The anti-hero openly challenges society and tries to fight against the lies and tactics used to oppress the populous.
 - D. All of the above
6. Explain why anti-heroes are more relatable than the heroes of ancient literature (like Hercules or Beowulf)?
7. Name your favorite characters in literature. Are they anti-heroes? Explain why or why not.

8. Write a brief synopsis of a story in which an anti-hero is the protagonist. Be sure to use descriptors that illustrate why the protagonist is an anti-hero.

According to the video, Guy Montag is an anti-hero. Write a paragraph using textual evidence from the handouts and *Fahrenheit 451* to support why or why not Guy Montag is an anti-hero.

Anti-heroes in Science Fiction Movies

Why are there anti-heroes in 90 percent of science fiction movies?

Then again why are there anti-heroes in 99 percent of mainstream movies?

Ours is essentially an **unheroic age**. It is an age hostile to grand gestures, sharp moral distinctions and larger than life characters. It is not an age of Beowulfs or Gandalfs.

Science fiction movies generally reflect that attitude. On every hero you can find ten less-than-heroic characters. Or maybe there is something in the nature of the genre itself. The boundless space, the outer rim planets, some inhabited with alien species, some utterly desolate. Against this backdrop established norms do not count anymore. Human resilience falters and fails. Well, whatever the reason, there they are. Complex, morally problematic, insecure or overbearing. **Anti-heroes**.

They walk the fine line between right and wrong. There is **moral ambiguity** about everything they do whether they save the world or simply kick some butt.

Unlike heroes, they have **no sense of mission**. They do not feel called upon to do great things. They are not extraordinary in any particular way. They are not lost scions of noble and old families, nor are they endowed with any special powers, or extra abilities, except perhaps sharp reflexes and keen instinct of self-preservation.

They are called many names - mavericks, outsiders, renegades. And although they mostly tend to be **loners**, they often have a **soft spot**, which they hide beneath **gruff manners** or **dry-wit**.

Most of them are **recruited from** the ranks of failed idealists, former policemen, soldiers, revolutionaries. Although you can also find the odd convict or criminal among them.

Regardless of their color or creed, they all have one thing in common - they have a strong sense of **not belonging**. Deeply flawed and haunted by their excesses, they slog their way through the world they mistrust, or dislike, or can't understand.

They have **crossed the line** that separates them from the law-abiding citizen. They court death, and tragedy and destruction follow on their heels. It is **dangerous to know** them, and yet when the going gets tough it is always good to have them on your side.

They are **resourceful**. No one is better at escaping from maximum security prisons or breaking into restricted government compounds or handling guns or flying a spaceship than these guys.

They will also **do things no hero** would ever dream of doing. Cheat, lie, steal, punch below the belt and even put their tail between their legs and call it quits.

There is another thing common to them all - though they have suffered a thousand slings and arrows of outrageous fortune there is still **one more fight** left in them. If pressed, they will once again put everything on the line and don their rusty, dented armor.

Although they almost never look for a battle, the battle **finds** them, through a **twist of fate** or the **influence of forces they cannot control**.

The state, or the police, or a sinister corporation bent on the world domination - that's what corporations are for! - as often as not hound them with schemes which are one part malevolent and two parts crazy. Small wonder they usually end up as borderline paranoiacs or career cynics.

They may find themselves **sticking up for a little guy**. Though they are just as likely to kick the little guy's butt if he gets in their way!

However, their **motives will always be questionable**. At times they will play the role of a protector if there is a reasonable prospect of **reward**.

And sometimes they will do it on a **point of principle** - if the local ruffian has so little sense as to start knocking the little guy's head against *their* table and accidentally spills *their* drink.

And when the credits roll, and there is only one man standing, deep down you know that **no sagas** will be sung about their deeds and ultimately their faces will fade into oblivion.

That is what makes them so **believable**. That is why we love them. And most importantly, they have all **the best lines** in a movie!

Read more at www.Explore-Science-Fiction-Movies.com:
<http://www.explore-science-fiction-movies.com/anti-heroes.html#ixzz2sDIkmSUo>