

## Comparison between Ernest Hemingway and Zhang Wei in Terms of the Heroic Roles

Shixuan Zhang

University of Science and Technology Liaoning, Anshan, Liaoning, China

906898660@qq.com

### Abstract

**There is no doubt that Ernest Hemingway and Zhang Wei are monumental literary giants representing their own native literature and cultures. The excellent works of theirs are numerous, and most of the works have been translated into several languages and spread to other countries in the world. These two writers occupy the important places in both domestic literature history and world's literature history. In the masterpieces of these two literary giants, the heroic images appeared frequently and made the readers impress a lot. The differences and similarities of creative inspirations, descriptive methods, and social influences of Ernest Hemingway's and Zhang Wei's are analyzed deeply in this article by the means of the hero images of these two writers' works.**

### Keywords

**heroic image, Ernest Hemingway, Zhang Wei.**

### 1. Introduction

A hero lies in every single person. It can be the warm and firm image of the father or the brave and clever tale of the monkey king. The definition of the hero is the combination of all the positive characteristics, such as brave, wise, knowledgeable, resolute, and capable of both breaking open a way through bramble and thistle and having the situation well in hand. With his or her open, the hero maintains peace and is in the lead of the world. No matter what kinds of difficult situation the hero is in, he or she can always get out of it and beat it because of bravery. Besides, the confidence of being sure to win and the fortitude of being fearless are the necessities of the hero. The competitor of the hero even takes pride in fighting against him or her. The hero is the one who makes the world prosperous and has a brilliant achievements for the era. Actually, the one is always the indelible emotional anchor and spiritual sustenance in the people's hearts whenever one exists, whatever the types of hero he or she is.

### 2. The creative inspiration of the heroic images

A good writer must have his or her rich life experiences. "History is a concept of tense and time, at the same time, a spreading style of social forms". [1] The writers usually show the readers diversity of the society in the different time dimensions. Indeed, the writer Ernest Hemingway has his own unique and legendary life. He had been a brave soldier in the battlefield of the World War twice. Also, he is really an influential writer in the literary circle and such a tough guy. Hemingway naturally put his understanding of tough man and hero into his works thanks to knowing very well about the features, moral courage, and manners of tough man.

The writer Zhang Wei was born in Longkou, Shandong province of China. Consequently, his creative method has the strong style of Qilu, accompanying with enough folk standpoint. In fact, he is also a writer who has the romantic feelings. The individual life experiences gave him loneliness, and he benefited from them. Zhang Wei had the opportunity to be close to the nature and feel things. More importantly, these experiences make the concept of hero clear and definite in his heart, laying the foundation for his speaking on the stand of masses later.

### 3. The descriptive methods of the heroic images

Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*, Henry in *A Farewell To Arms*, Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*, those three dimensional heroic characters were from Nobel Prize for literature's winner Hemingway's pen. The Hemingwayian tough man expressed the personal dignity and code of conduct that should be maintained in the chaotic world, facing with the opponents in the wide point of view, even the enemy of the sea would be treated lovely. [2] There is constantly the same heroic spirit in the different stories. Nevertheless, in some sense, Hemingway's scope of writing was narrower than any writers in the same age, for he wrote only one theme: how human face up to death in the world that loses all the values, and remains only strong feelings. [3] *The Sun Also Rises* is the masterpiece of Hemingway's. In this novel, Hemingway made every effort to not only reflect the wild abandon of the lost generation's own lives in despair and the mental state of seeking stimulation and relief towards the impetuous life style, but also depict that these "waste-land men" who were cavalier, negating everything, and cynical strive for the new road in the difficult position, and reveal their spirits of everlastingly fighting for freedom, justice, personality liberation, and personality independence. [4] everyone knows that Hemingway was a heroic warrior in the World War. One of his works, a classical work in modern literature *A Farewell To Arms* is threaded by war and love according to his own war record in the sad and moving form. Furthermore, this work that has been put on the screen many times is undoubtedly a well-known work. The heroic figures in the handed down book *The Old Man and the Sea* have the strong symbolic and philosophical meaning. This famous work has extremely huge influence on history of literature and has even been added into the textbooks of many countries. The expressions of the whole novel are rather implicit, leaving enough space for the readers to imagine. Both the sea and the shark symbolize the resistance in the life. The novel's characters still believed in hope and stepped forward without hesitation just in order to pursue for dreams while they were in the condition of separateness and obviously behind the competition.

Zhang Wei who received Mao Dun Literature Award also created a great many vivid heroic images, such as Sui Baopu in *The Ancient Ship*, Shi Ke in *Book of Foreign Province*, and Qu Yu in *You Are on the Highland*. His unusual experience makes him a literary giant and brings the world numerous fresh heroic characters. Moreover, Zhang Wei knows full well the necessity of analyzing the past and drawing lessons from history. He has once said: "Even if a good few of the writers keep looking forward and praising new things, I will always stay behind to look for the ignored and lost cream along the way." [5] One of his works, *The Ancient Ship* is a masterpiece that has deep sense of history and cultural details. In this novel, the whole China was represented by an old town and the generations of lives were symbolized by a river, and the spiritual dilemma was delicately described through the family's vicissitudes. The hero of the novel, Sui Baopu was absolutely a thinker and moral giant. The social responsibility brought by the hero was impressive and what he thought about was only seeking welfare and avoiding hardship for the civilians. *Book of Foreign Province* depicts the relationship between the foreign province and the center. In other words, the content is about thought, standpoint, and mental attitude of the outsider. Honestly, both the center and the foreign province have abundant connotations. The image of the hero Shi Ke was pretty three-dimensional, having initiative as well as uncertainty in that epoch. In addition, another great novel *You Are on the Highland* that has much more social significance than literary significance belongs to the structural realism. The writer described a combative family story crossed by the past and the present with graceful writing. The character Qu Yu in this novel is also a responsible folk hero. His family was so rich that he could live a decent life without any effort. However, he chose to start a first Chinese and Western hospital in the local area with all his property and strength and serve the public. In the troubled times, he tried his best to fight for faith in democracy and sacrificed himself for the magnificent feat eventually. With the brilliance of kindness, he faced up with the era that can be met only once bravely and did what a citizen should do.

#### 4. The meanings and social influences of the heroic images

“A man can be destroyed but not defeated.” This is not only the motto of Hemingway’s, but also the real reflection of the series of heroic images in his works, and exactly the highest state of heroic spirit. “Never give up” is constantly those tough guys’ spiritual pursuit. Actually, this kind of heroic spirit shows human a deep philosophical meaning: No matter in prosperity or adversity, naturally or socially, one should face up to the reality, accept and get through all the things, and walk forward steadfastly. One is still calm and indifferent even when the death is coming. Human can be physically destroyed, but eternally strong in the spirit.[6] “In terms of philosophy, Hemingway carried forward an action spirit of human; in the sense of aesthetic, the giant contributed a tragic beauty to human, a nobleness that one tried to do something which is known as impossible.”[7]

Zhang Wei is definitely a realist and never abstains from talking about death in his works. In some situations, death can be a theme, combining with the epoch closely. It seems to be the illustration of another fable: death is the end, as well as the beginning. Zhang Wei awakens people to cherish life in the manner of realistic. In fact, the responsibility of the hero is nothing but regarding remedy of others as duty. As a particular author, Zhang Wei’s own image and works do touch the readers’ resonance within by his firm spiritual position. These folk heroes in his novels are really heroic and moving figures with intense social responsibility and misery consciousness. The readers can feel the essence of all the things in this world through those characters. The usual tragic end of the hero in the novel makes people even more respect, admire, and cherish the heroic image. This world needs heroes, and this topic never goes out of style.

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