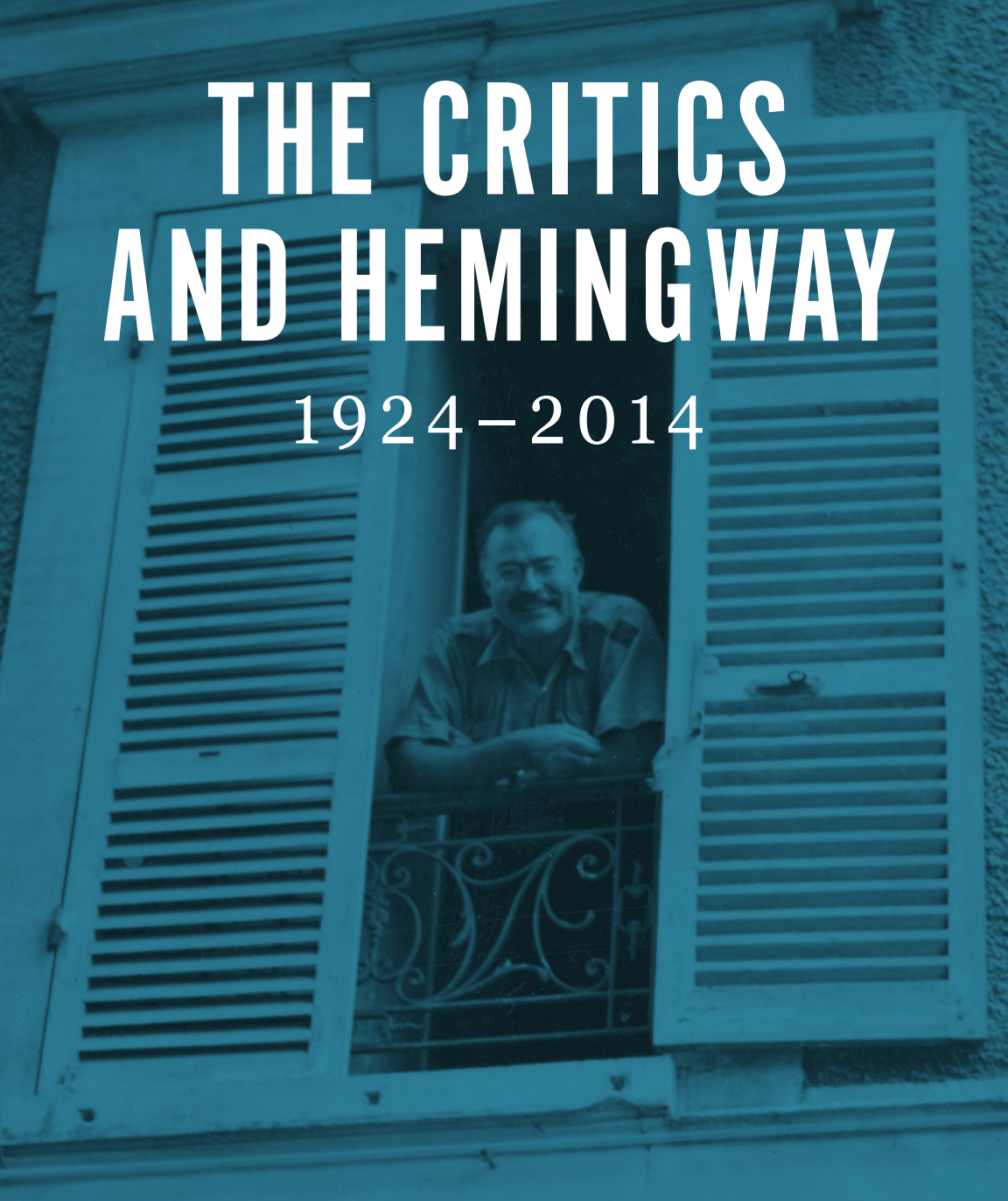

THE CRITICS AND HEMINGWAY

1924–2014

Shaping an American Literary Icon

LAURENCE W. MAZZENO

The Critics and Hemingway, 1924–2014

Studies in American Literature and Culture: Literary Criticism in Perspective

Brian Yothers, Series Editor
(*El Paso, Texas*)

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Shaping an American Literary Icon

Laurence W. Mazzeno

CAMDEN HOUSE
Rochester, New York

First published 2015
by Camden House

Camden House is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA
www.camden-house.com
and of Boydell & Brewer Limited
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
www.boydellandbrewer.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-57113-591-9
ISBN-10: 1-57113-591-X

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mazzeno, Laurence W.
The critics and Hemingway, 1924–2014 : shaping an American literary icon / Laurence W. Mazzeno.
pages cm. — (Studies in American literature and culture: literary criticism in perspective)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-57113-591-9 (hardcover : acid-free paper)—
ISBN 1-57113-591-X (hardcover : acid-free paper)
1. Hemingway, Ernest, 1899–1961—Appreciation. 2. Hemingway, Ernest, 1899–1961—Influence. 3. Hemingway, Ernest, 1899–1961—Criticism and interpretation. I. Title.

PS3515.E37Z741744 2015
813'.52—dc23 2015020976

This publication is printed on acid-free paper.
Printed in the United States of America.

Contents

Acknowledgments

My first thanks go to Jim Walker and the editorial board at Camden House, who have once again given a vote of confidence to my work. I would like to acknowledge the cheerful support I have received from the staff at Alvernia University's Frank A. Franco Library, especially Roberta Rohrbach, without whose assistance I would still be struggling to locate material important for completing a study of this kind. I also owe a note of thanks to the staff of the Swem Library at the College of William & Mary, where much of this book was written. Though most of them have no idea who I am, I know them well and appreciate their professional competence.

Introduction: "The Most Interesting Man in the World"

His charm is so contagious vaccines have been created for it.

His beard alone has experienced more than a lesser man's body.

People hang on his every word—even the prepositions.

He lives vicariously through himself.

He is . . . [the] "Most Interesting Man in the World."

Ron McFarland (2012) cites these epithets (and more) in his essay "The World's Most Interesting Man," an examination of fiction in which Ernest Hemingway appears as a character. Anyone familiar with Hemingway who has seen the Dos Equis beer commercials instantly recognizes in the bearded actor with piercing eyes and chiseled features (actor Jonathan Goldman, as McFarland points out) the larger-than-life writer awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

Hemingway biographer Scott Donaldson (2009) once observed that "Hemingway died the most famous writer of his time, and (we can confidently say now) the most famous writer of the twentieth century" (15). John Raeburn (1974) argues that Hemingway was the first genuine celebrity among American writers, emerging not only as an important author but also as someone in whom the public was interested apart from his writing. Expanding on this idea in *Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America*, Joe Moran (2000) says Hemingway was the darling of the Luce magazine chain (publishers of *Time* and *Life*), appearing frequently in profiles or news articles. More than fifty years after his death, Hemingway's name remains a kind of shorthand, immediately conjuring up images of the macho, hard-driving, hard-drinking daredevil who lives life to the fullest. Popular books such as Marty Beckerman's (2011) *The Heming Way: How to Unleash the Booze-Inhaling, Animal-Slaughtering, War-Glorifying, Hairy-Chested, Retro-Sexual Legend Within*, Craig Boreth's (2012) *The Hemingway Cookbook*, and Philip Greene's (2012) *To Have and Have Another: A Hemingway Cocktail Companion* rely on the Hemingway image to sell copies even though the content of their books has little to do with Hemingway or his writings. Additionally, new biographies continue to draw attention not only from academics, but from major newspapers and popular periodicals as well. Long reviews in the

New York Times, *Washington Post*, *Atlantic*, and *New Republic*, to name a few, attest to the continuing interest in Hemingway's life and work. Papa, as he liked to call himself in his later years, continues to be appropriated as a fictional character in novels and stories long after his death (McFarland 2014). In marketing-speak, "Hemingway" has become a brand—so much so that he is the only modern literary figure profiled by Robert Cottrell (2010) in *Icons of American Popular Culture*.

The famous "Hemingway style" that influenced more than one generation of writers is often held up as a model for students given to prolixity, careless syntax, and sloppy organization. To "write like Hemingway" has become a kind of gold standard for expository classroom prose (never mind that Hemingway was writing fiction and literary nonfiction). It is no surprise that a twenty-first-century entrepreneur with one eye on Papa's prose and another on his own bottom line has created "The Hemingway Editor," an online editing tool that "makes your writing bold and clear" (www.hemingwayapp.com).

Hemingway still generates sales, too. His books remain in print, and with the blessing (and often through the direct efforts) of his family, his writings are being repackaged along thematic lines in attractive volumes with titles such as *Hemingway on Hunting* (Hemingway 2003a), *Hemingway on Fishing* (Hemingway 2004), and *Hemingway on War* (Hemingway 2003b). The posthumous publication of works Hemingway left in manuscript form at his death has generated significant controversy.

Thanks to the movies and television, many who have never read Hemingway still speak confidently (if not always correctly) about his work. Adaptations of his novels and stories began in 1932 with the production of *A Farewell to Arms*, an early blockbuster featuring established stars Helen Hayes and Gary Cooper. The big screen has provided a way for people to experience the tough-guy Hemingway hero: Cooper again in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943); Humphrey Bogart in *To Have and Have Not* (1944); Burt Lancaster in *The Killers* (1952); Gregory Peck in *The Macomber Affair* (1947) and again in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1952); Tyrone Power and Errol Flynn in *The Sun Also Rises* (1957); Spencer Tracy in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958); and George C. Scott in *Islands in the Stream* (1977). These male leads played opposite an array of Hollywood's most popular female stars, including Ingrid Bergman, Lauren Bacall, Ava Gardner, Joan Bennett, and Susan Hayward. More recently, a ballet version of *The Sun Also Rises* was performed at Washington, DC's Kennedy Center (Macaulay 2013).

Family and friends have contributed significantly to creating Hemingway's popular image. He was dead less than a year when younger brother Leicester's *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway* and sister Marcelline Hemingway Sanford's *At the Hemingways: A Family Portrait* appeared in 1962. His sister Madeline Hemingway Miller published a more provocative look

into her brother's life, *Ernie: Hemingway's Sister 'Sunny' Remembers*, in 1975. Though they waited a decent interval before sharing their secrets with the world, in the late 1970s two of Hemingway's wives finally published their versions of life with Papa. Mary Welsh Hemingway's *How It Was* (1976) offers a portrait that, though colored by her perceptions as a fourth wife, provides useful correctives to some of the stories Carlos Baker got wrong in his 1969 biography. Two years later Martha Gellhorn (1978), Hemingway's third wife, published her account of her years with Hemingway, *Travels with Myself and Another*.[1]

Hemingway's son Gregory's (1976) *Papa: A Personal Memoir* is biased in a way that only sons can be toward their fathers. From a critical perspective, however, its best feature might be Norman Mailer's preface, which offers some insight into the way Hemingway influenced the next generation of American writers. Years later daughter-in-law Valerie Hemingway (2004), Gregory's wife, provided her perceptions of the family in *Running with the Bulls: My Years with the Hemingways.* Grandson John Patrick Hemingway's (2007) *Strange Tribe: A Family Memoir* has the advantage of perspective but still remains close to the family legend.[2]

Friends like longtime associate A. E. Hotchner have also capitalized on their relationship with Hemingway, perpetuating his legend in a series of books with supposedly inside information about him. Jed Kiley (1965), William Seward (1969), Arnold Samuelson (1984), and more recently David Nuffer (2008) have published similar memoirs. Veteran reporter James McLendon's (1972) *Papa: Hemingway in Key West* collects reminiscences by numerous family members, friends, and acquaintances.

It is doubtful, however, whether all this hoopla would have been successful in making Hemingway a literary and cultural icon if his work had been substandard. Hemingway's early novels were well received by American readers and sold well throughout his lifetime. Topping the list was *A Farewell to Arms*, which sold 1.8 million copies in hardback and more than a million paperback—ahead of quite a few notable titles, including all of Faulkner's. *The Sun Also Rises* had sales of 1.17 million copies in hardback, 1.1 million in paperback. Sales of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* totaled 805,400 in hardback; the novel reached number four on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 1940, falling only to number five the following year. Even a work that is today held in low regard, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, was number three on the best-seller list for 1950. Surprisingly, perhaps, *The Old Man and the Sea* was number seven in 1952 despite appearing late in the year and having so many people read it in *Life* magazine, where it was published before being issued as a book. Three years after Hemingway's death, *A Moveable Feast* was number eight on the nonfiction list for 1964 (Hackett 1967). Few who claim to be writers of serious fiction can boast of such sales.

Hemingway's works also achieved a certain level of notoriety early in his career because of actions taken by associations and government agencies who saw his fiction as either unseemly or dangerous. In 1929 several monthly issues of *Scribner's* magazine were kept off store shelves in Boston because they carried chapters of *A Farewell to Arms*. Italy banned the novel "because of the painfully accurate account of the Italian retreat from Caporetto" (Haight 1954, 102). Pressure from the Italian government resulted in private censorship of the screen version as well. A Hemingway story was in a 1932 issue of a Paris quarterly magazine suppressed by customs authorities in Melbourne, Australia (Notice 1932). The Nazis burned his works in 1933 ("Foolish Fuel" 1933, 4). Five years later, officials in Detroit removed *To Have and Have Not* from bookstores and from circulation in public libraries; the book was "preserved" in library collections, however, "among writers of standing" (Haight 1954, 10). In the same year *To Have and Have Not* was banned in Wayne County, Michigan, "on complaint of Catholic organizations"; the ACLU reported that it was the "only book suppressed during the year" (Haight, 103). Coming late to the party, so to speak, the Irish government banned sales and distribution of *A Farewell to Arms* in 1939, and fourteen years later it banned *The Sun Also Rises* and *Across the River and Into the Trees*.

Notoriety and strong sales may be important, but for a writer to remain in the public consciousness, there is no substitute for literary skill. And yet that, too, may not guarantee lasting success. As Robert O. Stephens (1977b) sagely observes, even if one acknowledges "the energy and craftsmanship" of Hemingway's "extraordinary contribution to narrative art in the twentieth century," one must still recognize that his reputation "was also the product of those who read him and told others about him" (ix). The list of contemporaries who reviewed Hemingway's work is formidable: American critics Edmund Wilson, Allen Tate, Dorothy Parker, H. L. Mencken, Granville Hicks, Malcolm Cowley, Louis Kronenberger, Alfred Kazin, Lionel Trilling, Joseph Wood Krutch, Howard Mumford Jones, Mark Schorer, Joseph Warren Beach, Stanley Hyman, and Irving Howe all reviewed his books, as did writers F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Stark Young, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Evelyn Waugh, and John O'Hare. As early as 1937, when Hemingway wrote what many considered his first really bad book, *To Have and Have Not*, reviewer Charles Poore (1937) noted that, conservatively, "twenty times as much is written about Hemingway as by him" and "ten books appear bearing traces of his influence for every one that bears his name" (21). Less than a decade after he published his first book, Hemingway was the subject of an article in an academic journal (Lovett 1932). By contrast, as a search of Jackson Bryer's (1967) *The Critical Reputation of F. Scott Fitzgerald* indicates, while a brief note in a 1932 issue of *Scholastic* provided a biographical sketch,

serious academic study of Fitzgerald's fiction was not initiated until 1944, when Leo and Miriam Gurko published "The Essence of F. Scott Fitzgerald" in *College English*. By then, critical articles on Hemingway numbered in the dozens.

Unquestionably, Linda Wagner-Martin (1998) is on target when she notes in *Ernest Hemingway: Seven Decades of Criticism* that "in some academic circles, Hemingway's work lives as much through the secondary criticism devoted to it as through its valid existence as text. The best criticism changes the lenses, and thereby gives readers new ways of reading, seeing, visualizing the art. It is in the interaction between the literature and its criticism that Hemingway's *oeuvre* remains most vital" (10). The trajectory of Hemingway criticism bears out her claim. When Hemingway started writing, critics, especially academic critics, were interested in the aesthetic, moral, and philosophical qualities of a work—elements that ostensibly transcended time, place, and even authorial intention. This rather Arnoldian approach to literary studies gave way in the second half of the century to a variety of critical approaches (structuralism, poststructuralism, feminism, new historicism, narratology—the list could go on), almost all of which viewed a literary work as a social construct, bound by time, place, and in most cases, the dominant ideology of that moment. It is not surprising that attitudes toward Hemingway changed as critics began viewing his work through different critical lenses. As Morris Freedman (2001) notes in his provocatively titled essay "Disparaging Hemingway," the result has not always been positive: "Hemingway has been the target of critical and academic discounting as perhaps no other writer in the English world since Shakespeare while simultaneously becoming a revered icon" (78).

The principal reason for what can only be described as wild swings in Hemingway's reputation lies in his simultaneous claims to literary genius and celebrity status—a combination that does not always bode well for writers who attract the attention of the academic world. An observation made a century after his death by future *Hemingway Review* editor Suzanne del Gizzo (1999) comes very close to defining the problem: "Hemingway is a peculiar literary figure. He is indisputably one of the most popular American writers of the twentieth century, yet there is far from universal consensus, especially within the academic community, regarding his level of skill or status as an artist." While the "dissonance" may be attributable to Hemingway's attempt to "straddle the high/low cultural divide of the twentieth century," del Gizzo finds that Hemingway still "inspires a certain degree of anxiety in the literary establishment." Often, she notes with a wisdom that belies her relatively junior standing in the academic community at the time of her writing, "one's critical opinion of Hemingway is often elided with the degree of one's sympathy for his 'way of life' and/or for Hemingway himself" (35).

It is sometimes hard to know whether a writer's career demands certain critical interpretations or if critical methodologies *au courant* at a given time steer critics to read writers in certain ways. That observation underlies *The Critics and Hemingway: Shaping an American Literary Icon*, in which I examine the way Hemingway and the many reviewers and critics inside and outside academe conspired, and continue to collaborate, in creating and sustaining his reputation as a literary and cultural icon. Its focus is as much on the critics as it is on Hemingway, and provides a critique of their assessments in order to identify the principles, predilections, and biases shaping their judgments.

As the foregoing narrative makes clear, writing about Hemingway's reputation requires one to take a broader view than might be required in studying the work of other authors. Almost from the moment Hemingway published his first collection of stories, he was noticed by both the popular press and the literary establishment. Within a decade he had become a bona fide celebrity, with people paying as much attention to his much-publicized globe-trotting adventures (and his romantic liaisons) as they did to his fiction. His work was the subject of essays in scholarly journals as early as the 1930s, and the stream of academic criticism has not abated. To understand the status of Hemingway's reputation, then, one must look at all these sources, since they tend to feed on each other, constantly revising and reworking critical and popular opinion.

Fortunately, the scholar who chooses to write about Hemingway has several useful guides to previously published work. Foremost among them is Audre Hanneman's (1967) *Ernest Hemingway: A Comprehensive Bibliography* and her (1975) *Supplement*, which are discussed at some length in Chapter 4. Her work was continued in Linda Welshimer Wagner's (1977) *Ernest Hemingway: A Reference Guide* and Kelli Larson's (1990) *Ernest Hemingway: A Reference Guide 1974–1989*. Larson's (1992) "Stepping into the Labyrinth: Fifteen Years of Hemingway Scholarship" provides important commentary on the quality of Hemingway scholarship, which had increased substantially in the previous decade following the establishment of the Hemingway Society and the opening of the Hemingway Collection at the Kennedy Library. Annual bibliographical lists in the *Hemingway Review* and bibliographical essays in *American Literary Scholarship* further extend the important project of cataloging the burgeoning array of criticism devoted to Hemingway and his work.

A number of other bibliographic studies complement these major efforts. In "The Hemingway Industry" William White (1963) highlights some of the books and articles that appeared within two years after Hemingway's death. Philip Young's (1964) annotated summary of criticism published after 1960 is impressively long, and Frederick Hoffman's (1969) bibliographic essay in *Fifteen Modern American*

Authors covers twenty-five pages. Bruce Stark's (1989) lengthy essay on Hemingway in Jackson Bryer's (1989) *Sixteen Modern American Authors* summarizes some of the more influential criticism published between 1972 and 1988.

Hemingway scholars are fortunate to have available a number of reference handbooks that make research easier. Miriam Mandel's (1995) rather formidable *Reading Hemingway: The Facts in the Fictions* is a compendium of information about every person, place, event, or object referred to in the novels and short stories, a handy guide for making sense of the many casual allusions in Hemingway's work and placing the fiction in its historical and cultural context. In *Ernest Hemingway: A Documentary Volume* in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* series, Robert Trogdon (1999) weaves newspaper accounts, reviews, letters, and snippets from Hemingway's fiction into a factual narrative of his life and accomplishments. Charles Oliver's (2007) *Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* provides brief sketches of virtually every character Hemingway created, plot summaries of his work, a brief biography, and appendixes providing information on Hemingway's family, a chronology, a list of adaptations, and brief bibliography of the scholarship Oliver considers most helpful.

More directly connected to the present study, Frank Ryan's (1980) *The Initial Critical Reception of Ernest Hemingway* is a useful starting point for investigating ways reviewers responded to Hemingway's works as they were published. Susan Beegel's (1996) exceptionally informative and insightful review of Hemingway's critical reputation in *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway* is distinguished by her ability to identify, describe, and critique major trends in Hemingway criticism over seven decades. I hope my more extensive analysis will complement and extend her work and be as useful to scholars as hers has been to me. Robert Evans's (2010) survey of Hemingway's reputation in *Ernest Hemingway: Critical Insights* is useful for its judgments about his enduring value but too brief to explain the complexities of the critical debate that has raged at least since the 1930s. In *The Critical Reception of Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises,"* Peter Hays (2011) does for Hemingway's most widely read novel what I attempt to do on a broader scale: examine what the critical tradition can tell us not only about Hemingway's fiction, but about our presuppositions and expectations as we approach it. One can also get a good sense of critical trends by consulting the four volumes of Henry Claridge's (2012) *Ernest Hemingway*, part of Routledge's Critical Assessments of Major Writers series. More than a hundred essays provide a representative sampling of biographical and historical accounts, reception and reputation studies, commentary on the major novels, and general assessments of Hemingway's achievement.

The Critics and Hemingway explores the dialogue among critics to see how it has shaped subsequent views of Hemingway and the future of "Hemingway studies." While others have reviewed the way Hemingway was treated by reviewers during the years he was alive, I believe it is important to summarize those assessments because they are an important complement to my central interest, the development of Hemingway studies, the academic critique of his work. I have tried to incorporate comments from sources not commonly cited, mostly reviews in newspapers outside New York, Chicago, and Boston. While reviewers publishing in cities like New Orleans or Richmond may not have had the same influence on readership as those writing for the *New York Times* or the *Atlantic Monthly*, their comments certainly played a role in enhancing or deflating Hemingway's reputation among readers of local papers.

Some might object that this approach gives undeserved credence to local reviewers and columnists who may not have undergone rigorous academic training that qualifies one to make informed judgments about literature. I would reply that my focus is on studying Hemingway not simply as a writer but as a cultural phenomenon. The current interest among literary scholars in "cultural studies" suggests to me that a broader look at how Hemingway and his writings have survived for nearly a century will be of interest to scholars and students alike.

Of course, the sheer volume of Hemingway criticism makes it imperative that I be selective in what I cover. Not only does this mean limiting comments on individual books and articles to assessments of how they helped shape Hemingway's reputation; it also means forgoing discussion of the many handbooks and guides available to help students and scholars alike navigate Hemingway's deceptively simple prose. Even though millions of Americans and others around the world have come to know Hemingway from the movies and television shows based on his fiction, I have also chosen not to deal extensively with film adaptations of Hemingway's work. The topic is covered ably in Frank Laurence's (1981) *Hemingway and the Movies*, Charles Oliver's (1989) *A Moving Picture Feast: The Filmgoer's Hemingway*, and Candace Grissom's (2014) *Fitzgerald and Hemingway on Film: A Critical Study of the Adaptations, 1924–2013.*

This book is not intended as an annotated bibliography of Hemingway criticism. Rather, it is an examination of how a reputation was built over a century by a combination of popular and academic commentary. That approach has influenced the methodology used to select and report on the materials I have chosen to highlight. On occasion I devote a page or more to discussing a single work that is seminal or otherwise important in the development of Hemingway studies. My hope is that my brief summaries of selected criticism are representative of what

was written at a given time. With rare exception, I have refrained from providing my own analyses of individual commentaries; instead, I try to quote from these so my readers can get a sense of the tone as well as the substance of what was written about Hemingway. Where appropriate, I have offered observations on how critical practice at a given time influenced judgments about his work.

If I seem to have given more weight to negative judgments, I offer as justification only that I find the tribe of Hemingway critics much like Tolstoy's families: the happy ones are all alike, but unhappy critics seem to employ a wide variety of methods to explain what is often a visceral reaction against Hemingway's work. My approach is generally chronological, though at times I have grouped criticism by category (e.g., feminist, new historicist, etc.). One advantage of a chronological review is that it permits one to see how a later critic responds to claims made by an earlier one. Using this approach also helps explain how the reputation of some works shifts over time, rising and falling as new critical methodologies discover the value of a novel or story that might have been hitherto overlooked, or point out faults that earlier critics failed to discern. As a result of my attempt to examine fluctuations in Hemingway's reputation, however, I may be accused of underrepresenting scholarship published in what is certainly the most important single source of Hemingway criticism extant: the *Hemingway Review*. My rationale for what might be perceived as a slight to the community of dedicated Hemingway scholars is that, while work in the *Review* is first-rate, much of it reinforces the high regard for Hemingway held by the impressive line-up of scholars who have chosen to publish in it. Most of them are represented by other works on which I comment at some length.

I am not part of the community of Hemingway scholars that has devoted its professional life to studying and writing about him, though I have on occasion written critiques of individual short stories and novels. I hope that bringing an outsider's perspective to a study of Hemingway's reputation will allow me to record fairly and comment disinterestedly on the sometimes hyperbolic claims for Hemingway's achievements and the equally vitriolic diatribes against him. My hope is that readers of *The Critics and Hemingway* will come away with an understanding of why Hemingway has generated such strong reaction and why, despite serious and often justifiable criticism of his writing, he remains an icon of American literature.

Notes

[1] Hadley Richardson, Hemingway's first wife, wrote no book about their marriage, but did record a series of tapes that were the basis of a book about her, Gioia Diliberto's (1992) *Hadley*. Hemingway's second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, also wrote

no memoir. However, the story of her relationship with Hemingway is recounted in Ruth A. Hawkins's (2012) *Unbelievable Happiness and Final Sorrow*.

[2] In a harsh review, Philip Young (1966b) called Hotchner's book more fiction than fact. Hotchner fired back at Young in a postscript to the 1983 edition of his book, explaining how Hemingway despised the young academic. For an account of this dispute and a none-too-flattering analysis of Young's work, see Holcombe (1986).

1: Spokesperson for the Lost Generation (1924–1932)

The story of Hemingway's struggles as an aspiring writer in Paris during the early 1920s has been reported in detail by his biographers. Under the tutelage of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and Ford Madox Ford, he worked at stories and poems, diligently sending them out and collecting rejection slips. Even in these trying times, Hemingway had no interest in being "discovered" by future generations; he wanted to be recognized in his own lifetime, to make money from his fiction, and eventually be acclaimed as one of the great writers of his time. One might not have thought that his first publications—a slim volume of poems and stories followed by a collection of spare tales—would have gained him much attention. Fortunately for Hemingway, however, he had a friend who knew a friend. The novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, already acknowledged as a writer of some talent, made sure Hemingway's work was noticed by his Princeton acquaintance Edmund Wilson, then establishing a reputation that would one day make him the most respected critic of his day. Without giving too much weight to this connection, it seems sufficient to employ the timeworn cliché, "the rest is history."

Early Reviews

Though two reviews of Hemingway's earliest publications in the first volume of the *transatlantic review* predate Wilson's, his review of *Three Stories and Ten Poems* and *in our time* in the *Dial* (1924) can be considered the first important assessment of Hemingway's ability and an accurate barometer of his potential. Wilson gets right to the point, opening with the observation that "Mr. Hemingway's poems are not particularly important, but his prose is of the first distinction" (340). He writes with a "naiveté of language" that "serves actually to convey profound emotions and complex states of mind." This new style is "a distinctly American development in prose" (341). With this brief notice, Wilson, himself only twenty-eight, anointed the twenty-five-year-old Hemingway the coming man in American fiction.

Wilson's opinion was reinforced by reviews of Hemingway's next publication, the 1925 collection of short stories titled *In Our Time*—the same title as his earlier book, but with conventional title capitalization.

Reviews of *In Our Time* gave wider notice that a distinct new voice had emerged on the American literary scene. Of course, it is hardly surprising that Fitzgerald (1926) would write a glowing review. He had read these stories in manuscript and encouraged Hemingway to send them to his publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, if Hemingway could get out of his contract with Boni & Liveright. Others less beholden to say good things did so as well. The *New York Evening Post*'s Herschel Brickell (1925) declared that Hemingway "does remarkable things with a mere handful of words" (3). Allen Tate (1926a) celebrated Hemingway's power of observation and spare style, which the *Trenton Sunday Times* reviewer called "as forceful as a pile driver and at the same time exact to a thousandth of an inch" ("Forceful" 5). Gerald Gould (1926) admired Hemingway's technique, which he described as unique, though he found some of the stories "cruel" (8). D. H. Lawrence (1927) said the stories in *In Our Time* were like a "fragmentary novel," with "short, sharp, vivid" sketches; "most of them are excellent" (73).

If there were misgivings, they were of the kind expressed by Margaret Doorly (1926), who observed that "some of us do not care so much for the strong, harsh outline, but like softer effects" and "gentle character delineations." The mere "conviction that characters are plausible and real seems to us not quite sufficient" (6). A majority felt like Louis Kronenberger (1926), who said that, despite echoes of Sherwood Anderson and Gertrude Stein, the Hemingway style "shows no important affinity with any other writer, and it represents the achievement of unique personal experience" (555). Robert Wolf (1926), who saw stronger influence from Anderson and Stein, nevertheless believed Hemingway had "produced in his own right some of the most sensitive and subtle short stories that have come from any young American" (3).

Hemingway's next publication, *The Torrents of Spring*, was a bit of a rush job, written expressly as a parody of Sherwood Anderson in the hope that Boni & Liveright would reject it, thus allowing him to send his work to Scribner. The ploy worked, and Scribner published the brief novel in 1926. Reviews were mixed. Some found it merely a "clever parody" ("An Anderson Parody" 1926, 7F), "high-spirited nonsense" and "delightful entertainment" wholly unexpected from the author of *In Our Time* ("Mr. Hemingway Writes" 1926, 8). Others found the book "tedious" (Latimer 1926, 16). The *New York World*'s Harry Hansen (1926) thought Hemingway should stick to writing short stories. Some found more in the slight volume, however. Ernest Boyd (1926) called it "an elaborate and exceedingly witty parody of the Chicago school of literature" and described Hemingway as "a true humorist and shrewd critic" (694). The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*'s Ted Robinson (1926b) agreed, calling *Torrents* "one of the most successful parodies we have ever read" and noting that behind the "excellent foolery" there is "good and pertinent

literary criticism" (3). The reviewer for the *Saturday Review of Literature* described *Torrents* as Hemingway's way of "freeing himself of an influence of which he is obviously conscious" ("New Books" 1926, 12). So did Lawrence Morris (1926a), who called *Torrents* Hemingway's "declaration of independence" (101).

The Sun Also Rises

Hemingway's independence from the tradition of Anderson and earlier writers—and from Victorian mores—was evident in his first real venture into novel-writing, *The Sun Also Rises.* His penetrating assessment of the Lost Generation sent the literary world into a tizzy. The New York papers were almost universal in their praise. Burton Rascoe (1926) said "every sentence" is "fresh and alive" (10). Conrad Aiken (1926) praised Hemingway's dialogue (4). Herbert Gorman (1926) said Hemingway has the "uncanny skill" of making his characters "live with an almost painful reality" (10M). The reviewer for the *New York Times* ("Marital Tragedy" 1926) called the novel "a gripping story, told in a lean, hard athletic narrative prose that puts more literary English to shame." The novel was "unquestionably one of the events of an unusually rich year in literature" (7). Praise came from outside New York as well. "Seldom does one find a piece of fiction with so much hard-edged truth in it," wrote *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reviewer Ted Robinson (1926a); it is "a masterpiece of a new kind of realism" (7). The *Richmond Times-Dispatch*'s Mark Lutz (1926), ecstatic over Hemingway's unsentimental portrait of postwar life and values, believed the novel would "take its place among the more lasting of present-day fiction" (9).

Hemingway received equally high praise from reviews in highbrow journals. Lawrence Morris (1926b) said *The Sun Also Rises* proved Hemingway was capable of developing a theme more completely than he did in his short stories. Bruce Barton (1927) said Hemingway writes "as if he had fashioned the art of writing himself" (12). Cleveland Chase (1926) described Hemingway's prose as "terse, precise and aggressively fresh," his dialogue some of the finest yet written (420). In a somewhat hyperbolic comparison, Chase asserted, "there is a certain Shakespearean absoluteness about his writing" (421).

Not everyone was quite so euphoric. The reviewer for *Time* acknowledged that much was expected of Hemingway in his first novel, but what he produced was disappointing. While the writing is sharp (except for "a few affectations"), his interests "appear to have grown soggy," concentrating on characters that do not deserve such attention ("Sad Young Man" 1926, 48). John McClure (1926), writing in the conservative *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* was pleased that Hemingway has "liberated himself from the artificially literary" and written in "straight prose" that, "not

yet perfected into style," remains "full of possibilities." But McClure considered *The Sun Also Rises* "a tour-de-force which proves little," a novel best suited for "open-minded" adults (4). Similarly, the reviewer for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* ("Hemingway Seems" 1926) expressed annoyance that Hemingway's "immense skill" was "hidden under a bushel of sensationalism and triviality" (13). Allen Tate (1926b) had a more nuanced view of the novel, finding it on the whole successful but lacking in sharp characterization. More serious is Tate's charge that in producing "a popular novel"—successful because it is much talked about—Hemingway had done some "violence" to "the integrity achieved in his first book." Perhaps, Tate suggested, it was "the only novel which he could write" (642). The reviewer for the *Dial* ("Briefer Mention" 1927) was less kind, finding that Hemingway created characters "as shallow as the saucers in which they stack their daily emotions" and seemed content to "make a carbon copy of a not particularly significant surface of life in Paris" (73).

British reviewers were more skeptical about the novel's merits than their American counterparts. The reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* ("Fiesta" 1927) said *Fiesta* (the title under which the novel was published in Britain) has "moments of illumination" but becomes "tedious after one has read the first hundred pages" (454). Edwin Muir (1927) complained that despite brilliant, natural dialogue and exceptional description, the novel lacked "artistic significance" (452) because the characters simply do not matter to readers. The *Observer*'s Gerald Gould (1927) said *Fiesta* "gives us neither people nor atmosphere," and asked rhetorically, "Why does Mr. Hemingway, who *can* draw flesh-and-blood, waste his time on these bibulous shadows?" (8). A curious and clever dissent appeared sometime after the great swell of laudatory criticism. Elizabeth Emmett (1927) never once mentioned the title or the author, instead describing *The Sun Also Rises* as "a bum book about bums, crammed full of conversation" (114). Her review title, "A Reader in Revolt," suggested her real target: the reviewers who overhyped a book she considered not worth the two-dollar selling price.

These few complaints had little effect on the sudden burst of praise for a young writer who went from being unknown in 1923 to the toast of the literary world four years later. Hemingway was described as "our outstanding realist" (Rothman 1928, 338), "the freshest voice since that of Frank Norris and possibly [Ring] Lardner and [Sinclair] Lewis" (Barton 1927, 12). Inevitable comparisons were made (almost always favorably) to Mérimée and Rudyard Kipling by Andre Maurois (1929), to Ring Lardner and even James Joyce by Lawrence Morris (1926b), who proclaimed that "no other American, writing today, can match his dialogue for its apparent naturalness, its intimacy and its concealed power of revealing emotions" (143). The *Bookman*'s Charles Ferguson (1927) named Hemingway one of the five rising stars of American fiction, a "new young

novelist[ ]" who has "fused new blood into a body of writing which a year ago threatened decadence" (251). English novelist Hugh Walpole (1927) called him "the most interesting figure in American letters in the last ten years" (302). Many agreed with Percy Hutchinson's (1927) assessment that Hemingway's originality, vitality, and dramatic sense combine to predict for him "a career of remarkable brilliancy" (27).

New Stories for a Growing Audience

In 1927 Hemingway followed his remarkably successful novel with a collection of short stories, *Men without Women*, a work that prompted the reviewer for *Time* ("Men without Women" 1927) to declare that "at least one of the Americans who live in Paris can do something more important than sit around in restaurants." Searching for ways to describe these stories, the reviewer called them "clear and crisp and perfectly shaped as icicles, as sharp as splinters of glass" (38). The *New York Times*'s Percy Hutchinson (1927) described Hemingway's art as that of "the reporter carried to the highest degree" (9). N. L. Rothman (1928), writing in the *Dial* (which had panned *The Sun Also Rises*), said the stories convinced him that Hemingway could be a great tragedian. Even Dorothy Parker (1927), not known for heaping praise on aspiring writers, called *Men without Women* "a truly magnificent book" (94). Outside the center of America's literary universe, praise for these stories was equally high. These "stories of supple originality" (Dabney 1927, 3) reveal "a new technique in the writing which for years suffered—one can use no other word—from the much advertised 'mantle of O. Henry'" ("Ernest Hemingway Displays" 1927, F5). By 1927 *Omaha World Herald* critic George Grimes (1927) could observe that "everybody, more or less, is talking about Hemingway now" (6).

H. L. Mencken (1928), who had rejected some of Hemingway's stories submitted to the *American Mercury*, was a bit less enthusiastic. Acknowledging that of late Hemingway and his contemporary, Thornton Wilder, had enjoyed great success—and "a great deal of uncritical homage" for their "technical virtuosity"—he said that they now must engage in some "hard and fundamental thinking" if they wished to make good on their promise (127). Joseph Wood Krutch (1927) also found it hard to reconcile Hemingway's stylistic virtuosity with his pessimistic outlook. Wood considered him the heir to "gaudier sophisticates" like Oscar Wilde and Aldous Huxley, who often seem bored but "never too bored to be voluble." The distinguishing characteristic of his writing is "a weariness too great to be aware of anything but sensations"; in his hands "the subject matter of literature becomes sordid little catastrophes in the lives of very vulgar people." Yet, Krutch admits, he has "an amazing power to make the apparently aimless and incompetent talk of his characters

eloquent," and his dialogue is sufficient to make these very short stories "vivid and convincing." Almost begrudgingly Krutch concluded that, "within the limits of what he undertakes in the present volume," Hemingway is "a master" whose stories are "painfully good" (548).

Edmund Wilson (1927) was not surprised by this spate of negative criticism. Within three years Hemingway had already achieved such notoriety that "it has already become fashionable to disparage him" (102). Wilson accused those who did not appreciate Hemingway's hard-nosed view of the world of either misunderstanding him or being unwilling to accept his pessimistic assessment of modern life. Wilson, on the other hand, celebrated Hemingway as an artist of the first rank who uses his "misleadingly simple and matter-of-fact style" to express "subtle and complicated" criticisms of the contemporary world (102). While Wilson had some problems with Hemingway's fixation on cruelty and suffering, he believed readers would find in Hemingway's fiction "the image of the common oppression" that exists "in our time" (103).

With a novel and two substantial story collections before them, by 1927 critics had the opportunity to evaluate Hemingway's skills in both short and long fiction. Several found his strength in the short story, among them the British writer Virginia Woolf (1927). While ostensibly reviewing *Men without Women,* Woolf paid considerable attention to Hemingway's earlier work, particularly *The Sun Also Rises*, which she found overrated. There is nothing really new or "advanced" in it, she suggested. Hemingway's characters are flat—a fault she discovered at times in the short stories as well. He is not "modern" in being able to see his characters' lives from a new angle, though the "candour" with which they are described in this "bare, abrupt, outspoken book" might merit the term. Hemingway is "skilled and conscientious," Woolf admitted, but his people are crude and crudely drawn, fully formed and incapable of growth or change (1). As a novelist, Hemingway simply won't do. In fact, Woolf observed somewhat puckishly and presciently, "After all the high screaming about 'The Sun Also Rises,' I feared for Mr. Hemingway's next book. You know how it is—as soon as they all start acclaiming a writer, that writer is just about to slip downward. The littler critics circle like literary buzzards above only the sick lions" (8). Fortunately, Woolf said, *Men without Women* is actually a fine collection, as was *In Our Time*, though she found Hemingway's ability to create believable characters suspect. While Woolf did not believe (as others did) that Hemingway is "the greatest living novelist," she called him "the greatest living writer of short stories." Of *Men without Women* she concluded, "I do not know where a greater collection of stories can be found" (8).

Woolf's review is often described as unfavorable, although her observations seem more balanced than other critics have suggested. The most controversial of her criticisms, however, was aimed not at the content of

Hemingway's collection but at its title. Bothered by its implications—that women are incapable of facing some of the harsh realities that the men in these stories must confront—Woolf argues that the modern tendency to discriminate among books by assigning some sort of gender preference can be injurious to sales and dangerous in creating a false impression of the writer. By telling a reader that a certain work is "a woman's book" or "a man's," the critic (or publisher, in Hemingway's case) brings "into play sympathies and antipathies which have nothing to do with art." Woolf believed the greatest writers "lay no stress upon sex one way or the other. The critic is not reminded as he reads them that he belongs to the masculine or the feminine gender." Unfortunately, some modern writers (she singled out D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce) "spoil their books for women readers by their display of self-conscious virility"; unfortunately, though to a lesser extent, Hemingway "follows suit" (1). What Woolf found disappointing and disquieting would become an issue that would affect Hemingway's reputation immensely a half century later.

A Farewell to Arms

The period between 1926 and 1929 was one of great personal turmoil for Hemingway—divorce and remarriage, relocations between Europe and the United States—but throughout these years he continued to work diligently at his craft, and in 1929 issued his second major novel, *A Farewell to Arms*. The initial favorable reaction eclipsed that accorded *The Sun Also Rises*. Few critics doubted that this was the big novel Hemingway was expected to write. Most recognized that the war is not Hemingway's real subject, but instead serves as background for his tragic love story. The novel was reviewed favorably across the country, generating praise from papers such as the *Daily Northwestern* in Illinois ("Versatile Hemingway" 1929), the *Dallas Morning News* (Capers 1929), and the *Springfield Union & Republican* ("Poignant Love Story" 1929). William McDermott (1929) said the novel reminded him of a tragedy and suggested that Hemingway should try his hand at writing drama. James Aswell (1929) said reading *A Farewell to Arms* left him "a little breathless, as people often are after a major event in their lives" (25). Ted Robinson (1929) said the book "hit me an emotional wallop such as I have not felt for years" (6). Walter Brooks (1929) believed the novel has "that quality of warmth, of actuality of closeness that only your own personal experiences have for you" (270).

Writing in the *New York Times*, Percy Hutchinson (1929) described *Farewell* as "a moving and beautiful book"; Hemingway imparts "a sort of enamel lustre" to the story, "not precisely iridescence, but a white light rather, that pales and flashes, but never warms" (15). Agnes Smith (1929) said Hemingway writes "with a poetic modern idiom" and creates

dialogue of "eloquent simplicity" that makes other writers' dialogue "seem smirking and stilted" (120). The *New Republic*'s T. S. Matthews (1929) called the book Hemingway's "statement of belief" (210) in human nature. He also suggested that this book revealed that Hemingway "is not a realist" (209); instead, *Farewell* possessed a symbolic quality that hints at larger truths beyond the story of Frederic and Catherine.

Many described the novel as an advance over *The Sun Also Rises.* For example, fellow novelist (and sometime friend) John Dos Passos (1929) called it "a first-rate piece of craftsmanship by a man who knows his job" (16). Bernard DeVoto (1929)—never really on the Hemingway bandwagon—believed that, while the former novel lacked passion, in *Farewell* Hemingway "for the first time justifies his despair and gives it the dignity of a tragic emotion" (9). The reviewer for the *Times* ("New Novels" 1929) found it "something entirely original" among war novels (20). Echoing those sentiments, B. E. Todd (1929) observed that "there may be cruder war books, but there are none gloomier than this very great one" which can be used "as antidote to the sickly poison of glory and glamour" (727). The *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer was willing to concede to Hemingway his unrelieved pessimism because it "animates an extremely talented and original artist" ("Some Italian Novels" 1929, 998). Burton Rascoe (1929) described *Farewell* as "a distinguished work of fiction by a writer who is to be counted among the best we have" (124).

English novelist Arnold Bennett (1929) said the novel is "hard, almost metallic, glittering," and "utterly free of sentimentality"; German novelist Thomas Mann (1932), promoting the German translation a few years later, called it "a masterpiece of a new kind." Hugh Walpole (1929) considered it "the finest novel of the year" (747). Clifton Fadiman (1929), an influential critic of the period who had complained about Hemingway's earlier work (Fadiman 1928), was wildly enthusiastic about *A Farewell to Arms.* There was "no reason," he asserted, that the novel "should not secure the Pulitzer Prize" (Fadiman 1929, 498). Unfortunately for Hemingway, Fadiman did not have a vote. The prize went to Oliver La Farge's *Laughing Boy*, a novel about Native Americans.

Balancing these euphoric pronouncements were reviews by a handful of critics still not won over by Hemingway's revolutionary experiments in style or his frank portraits of modern life. H. L. Mencken (1930) acknowledged the superb dialogue but said that "otherwise [Hemingway's] tricks begin to wear thin" (127). Lewis Galantière (1930), too, believed the novel suffered from weak characterization, though he believed the war story "is much more successful," and the book is crafted with great care and superb skill (259). The *Bookman*'s Robert Herrick (1929) found no such redeeming qualities in a novel whose love scenes he described as "hardly more than the copulation of animals," void of any meaning

that might redeem them from being "mere dirt" (261). Of course, Herrick admitted that he did not read beyond the episodes set in Milan, so he conceded—sarcastically—he was "not qualified to say whether such a love 'conceived in the muck of war' [a phrase from an early review that praised the novel highly] finally evolved into something which I should call beauty" (261). Though not calling for outright censorship, Herrick declared that "to my way of thinking, no great loss to anybody would result if *A Farewell to Arms* had been suppressed" (262).

That is precisely what happened to *A Farewell to Arms* in Boston, where the Watch and Ward Society, successor to the New England Society for the Suppression of Vice, managed to suppress publication of the July, August, September, and October issues of *Scribner's Magazine* after an installment of the novel appeared in its June issue. Curiously, the society did not raise objections when the book version appeared in October, but that did not stop people from being curious: a "Banned in Boston" label was sure to increase sales in other, less squeamish sections of the country.[1]

Early Assessments of Hemingway's Importance

Even before the publication of *A Farewell to Arms*, but especially after its appearance, Hemingway was treated by the press as a celebrity. Beginning in 1927 his sojournings in America and Europe, divorce from Hadley Richardson, subsequent marriage to Pauline Pfeiffer, and purchase of a home in Key West were reported in papers across the country. A profile in the *Dallas Morning News* in 1927 ran under the title "This Novelist Is a Bull Fighter" ("This Novelist" 1927, 3). Imitations of his style began popping up in periodicals and newspapers (Phillips 1927, 6). Newspapers reported on efforts by American expatriates to identify real-life counterparts to characters in *The Sun Also Rises* ("Stirs Paris" 1927, 9). A syndicated news brief reported that a prominent magazine agreed to pay Hemingway $50,000 annually to write short stories (Kinnaird 1928, 4).

Syndicated columnists abetted the campaign to turn Hemingway into a household name. Burton Rascoe (1927) recounted how Hemingway saved John Dos Passos from being gored at a bullfight and how he beat up writer Charles G. MacArthur in what was supposed to be a gentlemanly boxing match (1927b). In a brief notice O. O. McIntyre (1929), a New York gossip columnist, described Hemingway as a slapdash writer who preferred to spend time fishing and going to bullfights. Several papers carried a notice of Hemingway's being hurt in a car accident in 1930 ("Ernest Hemingway Hurt" 1930, 5).

Hemingway's reputation among readers and reviewers at the end of the 1920s is summed up succinctly in a review of *A Farewell to Arms* that appeared in the *Greensboro Daily Record* ("War Story" 1929). "During the last five years," the reviewer noted, Hemingway "has won

an extraordinary place in American letters. He has thousands of adherents among the readers of his own age; there are younger writers of talent who accept his leadership; he is imitated by writers much older than himself—a rare phenomenon—and one finds traces of his influence almost everywhere. His name is generally mentioned with the respect that one accords to a legendary figure" (8). The reasons for this sudden rise to fame are numerous, but the principal one, the reviewer concluded, "lies in his having expressed, better than any other writer, the limited viewpoint of his contemporaries, of the generation which was formed by the war and which is still incompletely demobilized" (8). Probably for all these reasons, Sinclair Lewis, on his way to Stockholm to collect his own Nobel Prize in Literature in 1930, said he was certain Hemingway would be honored by the Nobel committee in ten years ("Sinclair Lewis Says" 1930, 14).

In general, literary assessments added to the notion that Hemingway was the coming man in American letters and the spokesperson for his generation. In the first extended critical assessment of Hemingway, Robert Littell (1927), then an associate editor for the *New Republic*, looked for the qualities that allowed Hemingway to rise rapidly to a position of prominence in American letters. While Littell admitted that Hemingway was limited in his range of interests and sometimes a bit too cynical, his "curious original magic" (303) was endearing to admirers and threatening to a group Littell called "the Virtuous people," who were bothered by Hemingway's success at redefining "the purposes for which Fiction was brought into this beautiful world." Hemingway's combination of sensitivity and objectivity made him something of a "court reporter who doesn't know what is going to happen" but who can "change the present—cutting, polishing, omitting—so that it secretly leads up to and fits in with the future." This combination of "ignorance and art is the chief source of his originality" (304). In contrast to the highbrow who constantly says "more than he knows or feels," Hemingway "derives his strength from being, in this sense, a Lowbrow" who "instinctively mistrusts explicitness, analysis, imputation of motives, investigation of the souls of others, qualifying adjectives and a heart worn on the sleeve" (305). His unique gift lies in "his power to suggest other things while saying, in actual words, almost nothing at all" (305). Calling Hemingway "an architectural far more than a verbal artist,"[2] Littell believed that his strengths more than compensated for his shortcomings, and that those who are urging him to become more optimistic or less hard-boiled were misguided. "If he were more sensitive and amiable and soft," Littell concluded, "he wouldn't be nearly as interesting, so let's let him alone and see what he does next" (306).

Others found similar reasons to praise Hemingway. Walter Lippmann (1929), highly influential in American society in the early decades of the

twentieth century as a thinker and social critic, classified Hemingway as one of the novelists "who describes the doings of the more advanced set of those who are experimenting with life," a writer of "tragic farces" that portray a society "in despair" because it has lost its sense of values (283). In *American Literature 1880–1930* A. C. Ward (1932) argued that Hemingway's "significance in contemporary literature" lies in the "part his work is likely to play in helping to set the literary artist free from subjection to irrelevant taboos" (153). In the introduction to the Modern Library edition of *A Farewell to Arms*, Ford Madox Ford described Hemingway as one of "the three impeccable writers of English prose that I have come across in 50 years or so" (quoted in Grimes 1932, 6).

In "The World of Hemingway," another assessment of Hemingway's early achievements, Granville Hicks (1930)—then not yet 30 and Hemingway's junior by two years—made rather sweeping pronouncements on the value of his fiction. Hicks located the key to understanding Hemingway in the character of Nick Adams, with whom, Hicks argued, many of Hemingway's protagonists share personality traits. Hicks said it is possible to discern a "Hemingway hero" (41) and define his characteristics: one who would like to disengage from the world but cannot, who cannot keep himself from thinking and feeling, and who uses a "cultivated reticence" to protect himself from a world out to crush him (41). Hemingway's hero "stands between two worlds," rejecting the qualities commonly associated with civilized society but not yet able to reach "that simple and objective way of thinking, feeling, and acting which is his ideal" (41). Hicks approved of Hemingway's simple style but questioned his decision to limit his focus to the kinds of people that had thus far populated his work. He thought the Hemingway hero was not particularly representative of human nature in general and publicly speculated that Hemingway would grow as an artist only if he moved beyond his present focus.

Robert Morss Lovett (1932) did not share Hicks's reservations. In an academic profile in the *English Journal*, Lovett wrote about the reasons Hemingway seemed to have "so quickly leapt to fame from so slight and casual a spring-board" as the stories of *In Our Time* (609). Lovett explored Hemingway's use of sport and war as subjects and his deceptively simplistic style that appealed to a wide audience of readers. He found literary parallels in the later Elizabethans, Dickens, and nineteenth-century Russian writers. Lovett was certain Hemingway would continue to excel as a writer, using his "critical talent" and "physical vigor" to provide "further food for his robust talent" (617).

Not everyone, however, was ready to accept Hemingway as the leader of a new movement in literature. Among the generation of critics that came to prominence before the First World War, Hemingway's stark style and frank language took some getting used to, and some never

reconciled their critical principles with Hemingway's modernist practices. Fred Lewis Pattee (1930) said that attempts by modern writers to throw off older conventions "have gone often to absurd lengths. Realism and literary license have been pressed to extremes by such writers as Ernest Hemingway," whom Pattee accused of "violat[ing] every canon of the old handbooks and even the elementary rules of grammar" (326–27). Hemingway's "extreme realism" has "alienated many readers" (451).

In fact, the first extended study of Hemingway's fiction to appear in a book was hardly flattering. In *The Twentieth-Century Novel* Joseph Warren Beach (1932) titled the chapter in which he discusses Hemingway "The Cult of the Simple," and proceeded to use Hemingway as his prime example of what he believed was a serious degradation in creative prose. In describing the movement toward realist fiction from the more discursive works of the later Victorians, Beach suggested that Hemingway and others like him, "literal and hard-boiled," may have gone too far in reacting against "subjectivism" and the "psychological trend" (531). Hemingway's "notable reluctance to employ abstract nouns and adjectives" and his zeal to "reduce life to its simplest elements" (534) is not a sign of realist writing but "a return to the primitive" (537–38). Noting that Hemingway's people "refuse to be intellectual or esthetic," or even "polite or 'moral'" (537), Beach concluded that the "most correct word to apply" to Hemingway is "uncivilized" (537).

Beach's strictures seemed well founded to critics like Isidor Schneider (1931), who worried that Hemingway was already having a deleterious effect on a generation of writers enamored with his spare style and hard-boiled attitude toward life. Schneider complained about "the fetish of simplicity" that he found among modern authors, who self-consciously cut out "literary effects." This trend, he concluded, was principally the fault of "the writers of the Hemingway school" (184). While Schneider admitted that some fine works had been produced in the style advocated by "the Hemingway school" (a phrase he uses repeatedly), the few great works "are masterpieces for other reasons than their rhetoric" (186). Finding similar fault with contemporary literature, in a lengthy assessment appropriately titled "The Slump in Letters," Harley Gratton (1932)—no fan of current trends in fiction—insisted that if literature was to continue to be relevant, critics and reviewers should stop promoting Hemingway and Faulkner and instead champion John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, and Michael Gold.

Finally, in a curious but insightful critique Arthur Dewing (1931) wrote that most people had misunderstood Hemingway's true accomplishments. Dewing appreciated Hemingway's zest for life. Unlike so many of his contemporaries who, enamored with the trend toward interior exploration prompted by developments in psychology, focus on the complexities of characters' minds, Hemingway "finds too much delight

in living to be concerned with introspective thought" (366). Stressing "the vitality of physical activity, of sense experience, as opposed to the deadliness and unreality of comparatively isolated processes of thought," Hemingway "has given contemporary fiction a healthy and much needed stimulant" (370). Unfortunately, Dewing continues, most of Hemingway's protagonists seem to be extensions of himself. If he is to develop as an artist, he must "treat life in its broader aspects," and that may mean abandoning the simplistic style and rhythms that have made him successful (371). Whether Hemingway would continue to write the kind of prose that won him international fame (or notoriety) as the spokesperson for the Lost Generation and the harbinger of modernist prose style, or begin, as Arthur Dewing suggested, to "treat life in its broader aspects" in a new style with new rhythms would be answered unequivocally by the publication of Hemingway's next book.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of the activities of the Watch and Ward Society, see Neil Miller (2010), *Banned in Boston*.

[2] The comparison of Hemingway's artistry to architecture is noteworthy, perhaps even prescient, as it suggests the importance of craftsmanship in creating something durable. Andre Maurois (1929) made a similar observation, suggesting that Hemingway's style reminded one of "modern buildings—steel beams and cement" (49). The analogy is most famously made by Hemingway (1932) himself in *Death in the Afternoon*, where he asserts unequivocally that "prose is architecture" (191).