

Introduction



This volume is an all-new sequel to a previous collection, *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Critical Essays*, which was published in 1975. While a few of the essays here were originally published in the late 1970s, most were published in the 1980s and many in the last few years. In the first volume the "Comprehensive Checklist" (which broke new ground by listing the criticism by story) attempted to include all of the short story criticism, in English, from the beginning through the first part of 1975. The checklist at the end of this volume attempts to list all of the short story criticism from and including 1975 (not previously listed) up to early 1990. In doing so the checklist becomes the first comprehensive bibliography of Hemingway secondary materials published since Audre Hanneman published her *Supplement to Ernest Hemingway: A Comprehensive Bibliography* in 1975.

In my introduction I spoke of the checklist in the first volume as "a monster which has haunted and nearly overcome its creator." With this new compilation, the monster became nearly unmanageable, as I and several assistants over three years struggled with a body of Hemingway short story criticism that had grown enormous. All of the articles published in all the years prior to 1975 are roughly equal in number to those published in the decade following, and the output in the last decade is nearly double that of the preceding decade. The process of selecting the essays for this volume involved reading, evaluating, and segregating by type and topic nearly four hundred essays, published as articles or in books, from which we have been able to publish twenty-eight (plus five written just for this collection and the overview essay). Obviously, for reasons of space and distribution of topic a good many excellent essays had to be omitted.

There are a number of reasons for the immense growth of Hemingway short story criticism. Most important, I think, has been the recognition in recent years that, despite the continued popularity of several of his

novels, the short stories are Hemingway's great contribution to our literature. In addition, the antagonism inspired by the Hemingway public persona, which had turned many academics and critics against his work, has gradually, nearly three decades after his death in 1961, dissipated. Indeed, the change in the author's standing has been dramatic, although it has come so gradually over the last two decades that few have stood back and commented on it.

Those of us who have written about the author for many years, however, can feel a definite shift in the atmosphere. A good number of bright young scholars are devoting some or all of their attention to Hemingway research, many more women have become involved, and several older, well-established scholars are coming back or turning to Hemingway studies for the first time. Clearly, it is no longer an embarrassment in intellectual circles to be identified as someone who has written about Hemingway, and suddenly those who write about him no longer feel the need to be as defensive of their subject as they once were.

Beyond the elevation of Hemingway's status and the new talent this has attracted, there are other reasons why the short story criticism has not only expanded, but improved in quality from what in the mid-1970s appeared to be a criticism that was becoming sterile, ingrown, and repetitious. Perhaps the most important of these has been the availability, in the mid-1970s, of the Hemingway papers, first in temporary quarters and then at the Kennedy library. In addition, the process has no doubt been enriched by the publication of the *Selected Letters* in 1981, the previously unpublished "On the Art of the Short Story" (first published in the *Paris Review* and now reprinted in this volume) also in 1981, and, in more recent years, a series of new biographies and the posthumous publication of *Garden of Eden*. One stimulus has followed another in adding to our knowledge or altering our perspective of the man and his work.

The present volume is not only more substantial than the previous one, but its organizational pattern (which has since been imitated by other anthologists) has had to be altered to fit changes in the critical climate. The relatively recent concern with "theory" has turned our attention to methodology, the differences between critical approaches, and the philosophical underpinnings of critical processes. While the illumination of the short stories has been the primary criterion in my choice of essays, I thought it might be helpful to student and scholar, in order to respond to this concern, to display at the outset a wide variety of critical approaches, grouped together.

This section of the book contains some approaches which, like the

semiotic analysis of Robert Scholes, reflect the strict application of a theory with a specific name; others, like the essay by William Braasch Watson, were given names by me to reflect the dominant approach as I perceived it. The essay by Nina Baym does not set out to apply a specific feminist theory to "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," but it obviously applies, as many essays in recent years have, a generalized, feminist perspective to the material. Unfortunately, not every approach one might desire is represented in the section, since there are no essays on the short stories using some types of theory, such as phenomenology or deconstruction.

Lying, as I have thought of it, halfway between critical approaches and interpretative essays on individual stories are those essays grouped under Section II which focus on techniques and themes, rather than particular stories, and which discuss ideas that can be applied to several stories or the stories as a whole. New critical approaches have been joined in recent years by what can only be viewed as a wave of revisionism, and several of the essays in this section reflect this in rebutting traditional assumptions and turning to new possibilities. For example, the essay by Kenneth Lynn questions certain long-accepted tenets of Hemingway criticism, as set forth by such early commentators as Malcolm Cowley and Philip Young, and proposes a different sort of inner landscape for the writer as reflected in his work.

Indeed, with the new biographies by Michael Reynolds, Jeffrey Meyers, Peter Griffin, and Kenneth Lynn and with the textual research of such scholars as Paul Smith and Susan Beegel (both concentrating on the short story), a host of questions about the author and his work that once seemed settled have been opened up again, so that the atmosphere for discussion is freer and the opportunities for research more fertile than they have been for decades. All of a sudden, as Frederick Crews said recently, Hemingway criticism is fun once again.

The purpose of this volume remains largely the same as the first: "To bring together out of [the] welter of material many of the best essays on the stories, while trying to maintain the widest possible range of commentary." My hope is that this book will serve not so much as a collection of definitive commentaries, as a series of provocations, springboards to further discussion, while at the same time marking the way to the possibilities of new research. Again, as I said in my introduction, "Here, I would hope, we have some indication of what we have and do not have, of what we know and what we do not know." I would only add that there is much indication here also of what we thought we knew but now will have to wonder and think about further.

In two essays on the state of Hemingway criticism, one in 1975 and the other in 1988, I pointed out that one of the persistent problems has been repetition, since so many critics have written while largely unaware of what has already been said. This problem has become in recent years even more acute in response to the explosion of material—even the most well-intentioned scholar must have some difficulty in finding and reading everything he should read as background to his criticism. This is the main justification for our checklist, for confronting the monster. Call it a civic duty. Or putting deeds where one's mouth is.

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