

Raymond S. Nelson

*ERNEST HEMINGWAY: LIFE, WORK, AND CRITICISM*

(Authoritative Studies in World Literature) Fredericton,  
N. B.: York Press, 1984. Pp. 43. \$6.95

Reviewed by Donald R. Wineke

This is a book that does very well what it sets out to do: provide the younger scholar, particularly the college undergraduate, with a useful introduction to the life, work, and criticism of a writer whom its author believes will eventually be recognized as one of the "top five" writers of the twentieth century. While a reader might argue with Professor Nelson's prediction—considering the heavy competition that such figures as Conrad, Faulkner, James, Joyce, Lawrence, Mann, and Proust present—there is no question that, given the constrictions of the Authoritative Studies in World Literature format, he has given us a readable, solid overview of Hemingway's career. As the author of a previous book on Hemingway's debt to impressionist painting, Professor Nelson is particularly at home with Hemingway's style, which he discusses in exceptionally sharp detail.

The format is not perfectly congenial to Professor Nelson's purposes, however. The book contains five sections: a biographical sketch, a chronological list of Hemingway's works, a summary of the major works, an overview of Hemingway's themes and stylistic innovations, and an annotated bibliography. One wishes that the biographical sketch and the overview had been put in sequence. The first few paragraphs of the overview are devoted to the Hemingway personality and the way it is manifest in the themes he chose; this segment would thus have made a natural bridge between the biography and the works, giving Professor Nelson's treatment a unity that has been disrupted by the intervening sections.

In both the summary and overview, Hemingway's short fiction gets short shrift, which is regrettable because, in this reader's opinion, the best of his short fiction surpasses everything in the Hemingway canon except *The Sun Also Rises* and, perhaps, *The Old Man and the Sea*. One suspects that the problem here was logistical; the format evidently did not permit summary and evaluation of a large number of separately published stories. The summary is confined to major volumes, only a few of which (the two cited above, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) Professor Nelson fully admires. Given the neglect of the short fiction and the negative judgments Professor Nelson makes on such works as *Death in the Afternoon* and *Across the River and into the Trees*, his estimation of Hemingway's stature at the beginning of the overview comes as a bit of a surprise.

Students will find the annotated bibliography very useful, though it is restricted to book-length works. Missing among the biographical entries is Hotchner's biography, which caused a stir in the literary community when it was published in 1966. Its exclusion no doubt reflects its ill repute among Hemingway scholars. Still, a number of personal reminiscences by people who knew Hemingway are listed, so the omission of Hotchner's book is curious.

Like all books of this type, *Ernest Hemingway* is neither deep nor exhaustive; it does not pretend to be. At the same time, Professor Nelson does not grind any axes; his annotations to the critical works are consistently evenhanded; and he discusses the major issues in Hemingway criticism with a high degree of neutrality. Throughout the book he maintains the posture of a guide rather than a critic, and he carries it off in excellent fashion.

Herman Lenz

*EIN FREMDLING*

Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1983. Pp. 484

Reviewed by S. Dickson

Hermann Lenz's *Ein Fremdling* ("A Misfit"; 1983) is the latest addition to a number of autobiographical works which deal with his life before, during, and after the Third Reich, such as *Verlassene Zimmer* (1966, "Deserted Rooms"), *Andere Tage* (1968, "Other Days"), *Neue Zeit* (1975, "New Time"), and *Tagebuch vom Überleben und Leben* (1978, "Diary of Survival and Life").