Lesley M. M. Blume, in Everybody Behaves Badly, delivers a comprehensive yet detailed view of the time leading up to and then during Ernest Hemingway’s conception and creation of The Sun Also Rises (1926). While clearly and cleverly written, Everybody Behaves Badly is merely a synthesis—albeit a very entertaining one—of the people and events involved, information that will be quite familiar to most readers of Hemingway. Focussing on the years in question, 1921–26, Blume depicts Hemingway’s first attempts at writing fiction in Paris, as well as his marriage to the resilient Hadley. Blume then follows Hemingway into the salon of Gertrude Stein and the apartments of Ezra Pound, and details how Hemingway listened to and learned from both about the craft of writing. At this point, Hemingway is the young, ambitious, and charismatic ex-patriot writer attempting to hone his craft quite literally in a cold Parisian garret.

After taking her readers along as Hemingway witnesses his first bullfight, Blume covers Hemingway’s year as a journalist for the hated Toronto Star, as well as the couple’s poverty after their return to Paris, along with Hemingway’s often contentious and contemptuous relationships with Sherwood Anderson, Ford Maddox Ford, and Harold Loeb, who would later populate Hemingway’s novel.

The heart of Everybody Behaves Badly concerns Hemingway’s two trips to Pamplona, Spain, to witness the famous (or infamous) bullfights, and our witnessing of how he eagerly and confidently turned that material into The Sun Also Rises. Along the way, Blume dwells on Hemingway’s ascent into the Paris limelight, the breaking up of his marriage to Hadley (due to Hemingway’s affair with Pauline Pfeiffer), and the love–hate relationship Hemingway had with his Paris peers. If there are two heroes in Everybody Behaves Badly, they are the all-suffering Hadley, who endured poverty, infidelity, and loneliness, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, who remained Hemingway’s friend and literary backer, no matter how drunk he (Fitzgerald) was, or how cruel Hemingway became.

Blume tells the whole story of The Sun Also Rises in clear, clean prose, balancing Hemingway’s charisma with his betrayal of the likes of Anderson, Loeb, and Lady Duff Tysden, the model for Lady Brett Ashley. However, one must ask three questions here: who is her readership? What is her argument? What is new? Writing in a style that could be called high-journalese, Blume brings her subject matter, both people and places, alive for her readers, who, it seems, would be the readers of the high-end publications (Vanity Fair, Vogue, and Town and Country) she writes for. (Indeed, in her acknowledgments, she states that this book was originally to have been a magazine project.) Blume also seems to suppose a readership with only a passing familiarity with her subject. Once more, anyone who has read a bit more deeply about and by Hemingway will be presented with only the familiar here. Further, a book should always be guided by a theme, a thesis, an argument, but none exists in Everybody Behaves Badly. That The Sun Also Rises represented a bold new style of writing? That it was a novel that defined a generation? That Hemingway was charismatic, ambitious, yet at times despicable? To quote Ecclesiastes (1:9), “there is no new thing under the sun.”

This is also the case in terms of Blume’s sources. Despite information garnered from interviews with the descendants of some of the main players, culled during forays into the original materials in the Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library.
and Museum, and acquired from recent volumes of Hemingway letters, her sources are
names long familiar to readers of Hemingway: Carlos Baker, Sylvia Beach, Malcolm
Cowley, Charles Fenton, A. E. Hotchner, Archibald MacLeish, and Alice Hunt
Sokoloff, to name just a few. And of course, Hemingway himself. Lacking an argu-
ment, presenting little new information about its subject, the book could be entitled
Recycled Hemingway. When one considers the book overall, however, one should not
dismiss it. Blume has written an entertaining and extremely thorough reportage of
Hemingway, his time in Paris, and the writing of The Sun Also Rises. She accomplishes
what she set out to do.

Independent scholar

JOHN VUKMIROVIĆ

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Joshua L. Miller (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to the American Modernist Novel

Joshua L. Miller defines his aims for the recent Cambridge Companion to the American
Modernist Novel thus:

The field of modernist studies has been greatly enriched in the past two decades by new method-
ologies informed by studies of the transnational/global and hemispheric cultures, new media, race
and gender, science and technology, visual culture, translation and multilingualism, sexualities, and
many others. The Cambridge Companion to the American Modernist Novel draws on each of these
ongoing scholarly trends, with particular emphasis on how they generate fresh insights for inves-
tigations into the transnational substrates and superstrates of national literary movements. (4–5)

As such, the volume is accomplished, inclusive, and possibly mistitled. In a con-
cluding paragraph to his introduction, Miller notes that the words “modernism”
and “modernisms” are used interchangeably, primarily for stylistic reasons (15).
But the differences between these two terms make all the difference. Are we
reading an introduction to The American Modernist Novel or to some novels
written by “Americans” mostly but not entirely between the 1890s and the 1940s?
Miller’s admirably globalizing and diversifying ambit follows the transition
from a monolithic modernism to plural modernisms instituted by the New
Modernist Studies (as canonized by the PMLA article of that name by
Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in 2008),1 yet students might reasonably
wonder what the American modernist novel was. Between introducing the
history of the field of modernism and contributing to the “multiplicity (and,
indeed, incompatibility)” among modernisms, Miller opts for the latter (15).

But, as the best essays in this companion indicate, the notions of introduction and
fresh scholarly insight are not mutually exclusive. Scott Herring’s “Queering

1 Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz, “The New Modernist Studies,” PMLA, 123, 3