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Hemingway’s The Garden of Eden: Twenty-five Years of Criticism

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Hemingway's

The Garden of Eden

Twenty-five Years of Criticism

EDITED BY

Suzanne del Gizzo & Frederic J. Svoboda
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AND

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Introduction

When *The Garden of Eden* appeared in 1986, roughly twenty-five years after Ernest Hemingway’s death, posthumous publication of Hemingway writing was not a new thing. Scholars and the public already had seen works including *A Moveable Feast* (1964), acclaimed as a near-classic examination of the author’s apprenticeship and first marriage in 1920s Paris; *Islands in the Stream* (1970), a not-quite-finished novel of World War II in Cuba that began very well but tailed off to the level of a book for boys; *The Nick Adams Stories* (1972), a compilation of previously published and unpublished stories focusing on Hemingway’s most nearly autobiographical character; and *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), a bullfighting epic that had been radically edited down to become a series of three 1960 articles in *Life* magazine. These publications, though welcome and significant events, largely confirmed existing public and scholarly understandings of Hemingway as a writer deeply invested in masculinity, masculine pastimes, and a taut style characterized by authorial control. *The Garden of Eden*, however, was something different. Its publication was a watershed event that transformed Hemingway scholarship and forever changed thoughtful readers’ perceptions of the author.

Like several of the works listed above, *The Garden of Eden* was not completed at Hemingway’s death. Critical consensus is that he worked on it sporadically from 1946 until his suicide in 1961 (see John Leonard’s “*The Garden of Eden: A Question of Dates*”), producing a sizable manuscript that runs more than 200,000 words. A daunting mixture of holograph and typescript pages with abundant notations and marginalia, the manuscript features five main characters participating in several interrelated plotlines but without a completely realized ending. After Hemingway’s death, several scholars and editors attempted to prepare the manuscript for publication, including Malcolm Cowley and Charles Scribner Jr., all of whom failed (see K. J. Peters’s “The Thematic Integrity of *The
It was not until a young editor, Tom Jenks, joined Scribners in 1985 that the task was finally accomplished. A reluctant recruit, Jenks turned down the project twice before tackling it. The result is the only published version of the manuscript, a trade book version of *The Garden of Eden* published by Scribners that runs approximately 70,000 words.

In subject matter, *The Garden of Eden* is most like *A Moveable Feast*. The novel tracks the young protagonist David Bourne, a rising young writer of fiction, and his highly intelligent but artistically frustrated wife, Catherine, beginning in spring on their honeymoon and ending that autumn. However, *The Garden of Eden* proves to be a darker and more troubling book in which Hemingway conflates aspects of all four of his marriages with material related to the life of Zelda Fitzgerald in an examination of sex and gender roles, insanity, the burdens of family, and the privileges and costs of authorship.

These themes are explored through seemingly superficial repetitive details such as the characters’ compulsive suntanning, their erotic fascination with dressing alike, and their desire to have progressively more similar haircuts (and eventually hair color). This material echoes common elements of 1920s expatriate culture and reprises elements seen but not emphasized in Hemingway’s other works, including *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), among others. *The Garden of Eden*, however, is far more overt in linking these activities to unorthodox sexual and gender roles, as, for example, when Catherine, after cutting her hair, renames herself “Peter” in bed and suggests some alternative sexual activities to David—whom she renames “Catherine”—or when David and Catherine’s ménage expands to include a second woman in an initially bisexual relationship that eventually supplants the original marriage.

These sexual experiments are further complicated by the role of Africa in the novel. References to Africa provide a secondary storyline about David’s childhood, which puts an emphasis on his masculinity and creative process, but they also contextualize the characters’ desire to darken their skin as a sign of their sexual liberation and freedom from Western cultural norms within a discourse of primitivism. In addition to these rich and controversial thematic elements, Hemingway appears to have been experimenting with narrative form as he has the young writer, David, craft a story of an elephant hunt in Africa with his father within the main narrative of the honeymoon. This story within a story creates a self-conscious and reflective narrative structure evocative of metafictional and postmodern literary experiments. Thematically and stylistically, then, Hemingway appears to have been expanding his art and subverting his hyper-masculine authorial persona in *The Garden of Eden*.

Not surprisingly, *The Garden of Eden* has elicited strong reactions from readers, reviewers, and scholars since its publication. While many recreational
readers and Hemingway fans—and some scholars and critics—resisted the new image of Hemingway that the novel presented, many others were invigorated, sensing an opportunity to reimagine the iconic author in terms relevant to late twentieth-century concerns, including issues such as gender, sexuality, and race. Almost immediately they began comparative studies between the manuscript and the published version of the novel, explorations of the autobiographical roots of the characters and events, and the process of rereading and re-evaluating Hemingway’s oeuvre and life in terms of the revelations in the text. The first wave of scholarship tended to focus on the status of the text itself. Critics scrutinized the work of editor Tom Jenks and questioned Scribners’ motives for presenting this complex posthumous novel as a trade book with no scholarly apparatus. Over time, scholars have continued to lament the fact that they must work with the edited version of the text (or consult the complete manuscript in the Hemingway Collection of the John F. Kennedy Library). This limitation, however, has not diminished interest in thinking about, writing about, and teaching this important and transformative addition to Hemingway studies. Although scholars recognize the significance of the trade book’s publication and are generally grateful to have a version of the text they may use for study and teaching, there is nonetheless a persistent call for a scholarly edition of The Garden of Eden, one that we would like to take this opportunity to repeat.

The limitations of working with the trade edition aside, the publication of the novel presented other significant challenges to critics. They found themselves tackling difficult issues such as the proper way to address a posthumously published work characterized by intricate representations of gender, sexuality, and race. In addition, many scholars had to wrestle with their sense of obligation to and investment in Hemingway’s public image. Their work often led them into deeply personal territory in Hemingway’s life and writing, not to mention their own. Given the sensitivity of the issues at hand, scholars had to be, in Toni Morrison’s words, careful but not “too polite” as they presented scholarship that would occasion a radical shift in how readers understand Hemingway—his persona, life, and writing. In fact, we do not believe it is an overstatement to say that the publication of the novel and scholarly work on it represent one of the most significant and comprehensive editorial and critical interventions in the study of American literature in the past half century.

For this reason, although we have assembled a principally retrospective volume, we are pleased to begin the collection with a new essay by Tom Jenks, the editor who prepared The Garden of Eden for publication twenty-five years ago. After its publication, Jenks found himself an indispensable component of an aggressive publicity campaign for the novel. He soon understood that Scribners and scholars had different reasons for wanting to see Garden in print. His mandate to salvage
a coherent and publishable story from the manuscript was in many ways at odds with scholars’ interest in the details of the manuscript, in particular its multiple plotlines and overlapping characters, as well as the palimpsest of revisions. In the wake of the novel’s publication, scholars sometimes held Jenks personally accountable for what he excluded and were frustrated by his reluctance to explain his editorial decisions in academic detail. After months of attempting to answer countless queries from Hemingway aficionados and scholars longing for privileged glimpses into his editorial process or even into Hemingway himself, Jenks registered his frustration at the 1987 Modern Language Association meeting, where he politely vowed to remain silent on the topic for the foreseeable future. Since this volume celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the novel's publication, we tracked down Jenks to discover if he was willing to break his silence. He was. As a result, this collection features his essay “The Garden of Eden at Twenty-five”; it is the only previously unpublished article in the volume.

In the retrospective part of the collection, we have gathered in one place what we believe to be the most important criticism published on The Garden of Eden to date in an effort to provide an overview of the trends in and the contours of the critical conversations over the past twenty-five years as well as to indicate possibilities for future scholarship. As with any attempt at such a collection, we had to make difficult decisions when selecting the articles and determining how to represent them. Our guiding principle was simple: we sought out articles that made discoveries or presented new ways of thinking about the novel that proved fruitful for the writers and scholars who followed. In an effort to capture the initial reaction to the novel, we begin the volume with mainstream reviews written by distinguished novelists E. L. Doctorow and John Updike. These reviews are followed by scholarly studies of the novel divided into four major sections: “Editing and Manuscript Issues”; “Narrative Structure and Technique”; “Issues of Gender, Sexuality, and Race”; and “The Fitzgerald Connection.” In an effort to re-create the critical conversation on particular topics and areas of inquiry as it developed, we have organized the articles within each section chronologically. For this reason, we decided, where possible, to reprint article versions of scholarship, even when the essays were revised and included as chapters in books published later. The essay versions allow us to capture the dynamic of the critical conversations as they unfolded. We have, however, clearly indicated articles that eventually appeared in book publications in both the head note to the article and the annotated bibliography.

Reviews of the novel were generally positive. Despite reservations about the ethics and propriety of posthumous publication, most reviewers recognized that The Garden of Eden would occasion a major reconsideration of Hemingway and his work, one that would probably keep his (at the time) fragile reputation alive
amid the changing cultural priorities of the late twentieth century. Doctorow and Updike in particular appreciated his efforts while attempting to square what Scribners published with what Hemingway wrote. In “Ernest Hemingway: R.I.P.,” (1986) which initially appeared as a review in the New York Times, E. L. Doctorow argues that The Garden of Eden is an act of artistic bravery on the part of the aging and established writer. Doctorow recognizes that Hemingway was taking tremendous risks with his established persona and literary reputation not only in the nuanced representation of gender and sexuality in the story but also in the critical exploration of David’s exploitative creative process. Like many reviewers, Doctorow addresses the challenges of posthumous publication and the difficulty of interpreting the author’s intentions: “But the truth about editing the work of a dead writer . . . is that you can only cut to affirm his strengths, to reiterate the strategies of style for which he is known; whereas he himself may have been writing to transcend them.” Such musings temper Doctorow’s critique of the weaknesses of the published text (in particular the lack of development in David’s and Marita’s characters) as he speculates how the manuscripts might (or might not) clarify some of these issues. But he singles out Catherine Bourne as an accomplishment, finding her Hemingway’s best female character and a highlight of the novel.

John Updike agrees. Although he too questions the validity of the published version and ponders the implications and complications of posthumous publication, he recognizes the significance of the novel for readers’ understanding of Hemingway, calling it “a fresh slant on the old magic” and “a new reading of Hemingway’s sensibility.” Like Doctorow, he recognizes that this novel offers an occasion to revise and reimagine popular perceptions of Hemingway. He also speculates about the biographical roots of the characters whom he reads as versions of Hemingway’s wives. Other reviewers were more cautious, and some (probably best represented by Barbara Probst Solomon², who concluded that “Hemingway’s publisher has committed a crime”) were even hostile. Although positive reviews dominated, the reviews testify to the thorny nature of posthumous publication and the nearly impossible but unavoidable task of attempting to divine the author’s intentions for the project, but ultimately nearly all reviewers recognized the value of having this text in print.

As can be seen in the reviews, questions of editing and the relationship of manuscript to published work quickly engaged critics and continue to do so. In “Manuscripts and Editing Issues,” we have gathered scholarship that addresses the differences between the printed text and the manuscripts. Frequently, these articles provide excellent descriptions of the material that was cut from the published version of the novel, giving readers a fuller sense of the manuscript and the challenges Hemingway faced during its composition. Robert E. Fleming and
K. J. Peters survey what is lost in the published version of the novel. Fleming’s (1989) classic article provides a valuable overview of the material cut from the manuscripts, with a particular focus on the inadequacy of the published ending, which he argues does not capture the sinister tone of any of Hemingway’s drafted endings. Peters’s (1991) detailed manuscript analysis discusses the cut characters and subplots as well as lost references to religion and to Rodin’s The Metamorphosis, the provocative statue that forms a leitmotif in the manuscript but is eliminated from the published novel. In a later article, John Leonard (2003) questions the critical consensus that the novel was largely composed in the late 1940s and early 1950s and offers some informed speculation about Hemingway’s composition process.

The unusual structure of the narrative also draws its share of attention. In “Narrative Structure,” we have gathered essays that explore the intersection of form and theme. The authors in this section address how the structure of the novel links to broader concerns about Hemingway’s changing style and the role of gender and race in the novel. Robert B. Jones and Beatriz Penas Ibáñez explore the innovative and arguably postmodern narrative. Jones (1987) considers the metafictional elements in the novel, both via the elephant hunt story that David Bourne writes and through the idea that the novel itself seems to be the “honeymoon narrative” that David is writing within the novel. Penas Ibáñez (1998) suggests that Garden is a stylistically innovative text in which Hemingway inscribes his well-known modernist style within a postmodernist text that demonstrates a self-reflexivity lacking in his earlier works.

James Nagel and Rose Marie Burwell examine what the structure of the novel reveals about Hemingway’s attitudes toward the creative process. Nagel (1989) focuses on the elephant hunt story, which he calls the “heart” of the novel. He argues that Catherine’s distracting and destructive “experiments” spur David to recall his childhood difficulties with his father and write the elephant hunt story. For Nagel, the writing of the hunt story is a triumph of David Bourne’s creative process over Catherine’s destructive tendencies; it demonstrates how he uses difficulties in his married life to create his art. Burwell (1993) is similarly concerned with the relationship between David’s writing and his life, but she teases out some of the gender implications of the novel by examining how David Bourne (and, by extension, Hemingway) links the creative process to masculinity through the tension between the African stories and the honeymoon narrative. Like Nagel, she sees Catherine’s behavior as a catalyst for David’s writing, but one against which he must define himself and his creative products.

Without a doubt, however, the most vibrant, controversial, and transformative scholarly work on The Garden of Eden concerns the novel’s presentation of gender, sexuality, and race. Mark Spilka’s “Hemingway’s Barbershop Quintet”
(1987) is an early contribution to the discussion published only one year after *Garden* appeared in print. Spilka combines a study of the manuscripts with biography and intertextual links to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night* (and to Rudyard Kipling), to highlight the centrality of gender in the text from the obsessive interest in haircuts to the presentation of David’s creative process as he drafts and rewrites the African stories. This article is a clear precursor to Spilka’s 1990 book-length study *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny*, which was a milestone in consideration of the author’s use of issues of gender in his works. Spilka struggled to find a language for Hemingway’s nuanced presentation of gender, which led him to describe the characters and their sexual experiments as “androgynous,” a term which was at first widely adopted by commentators and critics of the text, but later critics challenged the term as vague as they attempted more precise analyses of what Hemingway was doing with gender.

Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes (1992) build on Spilka’s observations about the centrality of gender in *Garden*. Placing *The Garden of Eden* in the context of other Hemingway texts (including “Fathers and Sons,” “Mr. and Mrs. Eliot,” and “The Sea Change”), they suggest that for the author, truthful writing is associated with race and transgressive sexuality through the concept of primitivism, or what Hemingway called “tribal things.” Carl Eby (1995) picks up on Comley and Scholes’s observation about the relationship between sex and race, but he attempts to account for this relationship through a psychological study of Hemingway. In particular, Eby theorizes that Hemingway was a fetishist who was fundamentally confused about the boundaries of his ego, body, and gender as a result of his childhood experience of being twinned with his older sister, Marcelline. From this perspective, Eby understands the instability of gender and race in the novel as a symptom of Hemingway’s fetishism, which in turn accounts for his fascination with sexual identity in particular.

Eby’s observations about the instability of binaries in the novel (male/female, light/dark, white/black) are further explored by critics such as Ira Elliott (2000) and Cary Wolfe (2002). Elliott suggests that the complex play of binaries in Hemingway’s novel indicates bodies in crisis, although, departing from Eby, he attributes this crisis to cultural rather than personal contexts. Wolfe offers a new and unique perspective on the novel rooted in a post-humanist approach. He suggests that the binary oppositions in the novel are commented upon—and perhaps also resolved by—Hemingway’s interest in cross-species relationships, particularly between David and the elephant in the hunt story. Unlike other critics, Wolfe finds that David’s work on the elephant story serves ultimately to distance him from his father’s binary colonial thinking.

Steven C. Roe and Kathy Willingham combine Comley and Scholes’s interest in gender and the body with Burwell’s and Nagel’s concerns about creativity in
the novel. Roe (1992) examines the cost of David's authorship, which he sees as exploitative and self-centered, comparing David's ruthless use of his life in his art to his father's elephant hunting for ivory and even (via hints in the manuscript) to the Bluebeard fairy tale, in which a man kills wives for disobedience and intruding upon his privacy. Ultimately, however, Roe finds that Hemingway is critical of David's writing process and sympathetic to Catherine, who appears to be sacrificed to it. Willingham (1993) similarly finds Hemingway to be sympathetic and sensitive to women in his portrayal of Catherine, but she goes beyond sympathy to suggest that in Catherine Hemingway explores uniquely feminist modes of artistic expression focused on the body that prefigure theories of *l'écriture féminine*. Daniel Kempton (1998) offers a counterargument to the association between sexual transgression and artistic creativity in *The Garden of Eden* inaugurated by Comley and Scholes; he suggests that an examination of lines deleted from the manuscript version offers less definitive support for that view.

J. Gerald Kennedy (1991), in a gesture elaborated upon later by critics such as Debra Moddelmog, explores the implications of *Garden*’s presentation of gender and sexuality for Hemingway’s public image. Kennedy compares *Garden* to the memoir *A Moveable Feast* and discusses the reasons why Hemingway would present the young artist figure in such a radically different way in *Garden* despite its many similarities in themes and plotlines to *Feast*, which was written at roughly the same time. Moddelmog (1996) examines how commercial considerations and the power of the Hemingway persona probably made the published novel a less transgressive and complex version of the complete manuscript. She is particularly interested in how the published text, as well as a critical conversation funneled through the concept of androgyny and an easy association between race and sex, has obscured issues of sexuality, and in particular homosexuality, in the manuscript.

In “The Fitzgerald Connection,” we gather two of a smattering of articles that focus specifically on *The Garden of Eden*’s indebtedness to F. Scott Fitzgerald, particularly his novel *Tender Is the Night* and his wife, Zelda. Robert E. Fleming (1998) examines *Garden*’s connections to *Tender Is the Night*, arguing that despite initial reservations, Hemingway came to regard it as Fitzgerald’s best novel, so much so that he revisited its principle themes in *The Garden of Eden*. Nancy R. Comley (1998) also examines intertextual links between Hemingway’s novel and *Tender Is the Night*, adding Zelda Fitzgerald’s *Save Me the Waltz* as she draws many parallels in setting and characterization and argues that all of these works may be read as competing narratives of how to present female madness and male responses to it.

The scholarship on *The Garden of Eden* is rich and varied, and yet certain constant concerns emerge, most notably concern about the status of Hemingway’s
masculinity and, by extension, his sexuality. Most writers in one way or another address the implications of the novel in this regard: Is Hemingway embracing his masculinity or distancing himself from it? Is a disciplined masculinity the wellspring of his creativity or does his creativity extend from his sense of the feminine? How should we (if at all) revise our sense of Hemingway’s masculine persona? Is it defensive? A mask? *The Garden of Eden*, however, works because it frustrates attempts to answer these questions simply and because it asks us to consider the possibility that the answer may entail a “both-and” rather than an “either-or” response.

Although this collection focuses on essays written about *The Garden of Eden*, a number of book-length studies have been published that are vital to the critical conversation about the novel. Whenever possible, we have included essay-length pieces to represent (at least in part) the contribution of such books specifically to understandings of *The Garden of Eden*. Leading these book-length studies is Mark Spilka’s groundbreaking *Hemingway’s Quarrel with Androgyny* (1990), the first sustained effort to link works and biography to suggest the complexity of the novelist’s concern with sex and gender roles. Also an early and vital contribution to the critical conversation was novelist and critic Toni Morrison’s 1993 *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, a book that explores the structuring but often invisible “Africanist” presence in white American literature. Although other scholars were in the process of probing the role of race in *Garden* (Comley and Scholes, and Eby, in particular) when *Playing in the Dark* was published, Morrison’s work so powerfully revealed the integral role race played in Hemingway’s sense of gender and in his attempts to critique Western norms that it quickly became the starting point for many subsequent scholars’ discussion of the role of race.

Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes’s *Hemingway’s Genders: Rereading the Hemingway Text* (1996) extends the conversation on gender (and, to a certain extent, race) into the posthumous and unpublished works and explores Hemingway’s association between gender and sexual experimentation and race. Rose Marie Burwell’s *Hemingway: The Postwar Years and the Posthumous Novels* (also 1996) looks for patterns of unity in the author’s life and the posthumous works, a direction since followed by a number of other scholars, most recently Hilary Justice in *Bones of the Others: The Hemingway Text from the Lost Manuscripts to the Posthumous Novels* (2006). Burwell also probes Hemingway’s fascination with gender roles, although she argues that *Garden* ultimately reinscribes the author’s concern with masculinity and heteronormativity.

In *Hemingway’s Fetishism: Psychoanalysis and the Mirror of Manhood* (1999), Carl Eby directly confronts the novelist’s psychology as it relates to gender and race (and specifically the erotic interest in hair that appears in *The Garden of*
*Eden*), drawing on a range of psychoanalytic theories and revelations about his early experience of being “twinned” with his sister. Eby’s ability to use alternate theories without being dominated by them set an important example for later studies as various forms of theory increasingly have informed scholars’ readings of the novel. Most important, through a careful study of Hemingway as a fetishist, Eby explains how Hemingway’s masculinity could coexist with his desire for sexual experiences that initially appear to subvert it.

Debra A. Moddelmog’s *Reading Desire: In Pursuit of Ernest Hemingway* (also 1999) examines the way Hemingway’s hyper-masculine persona has impeded full discussion of the author’s work and identity in both scholarly and popular forums. In particular, she claims that readers’ and critics’ assumptions about and investments in the author’s popular image have precluded a full discussion of issues of identity—and specifically sexual identity—in his life and work. Thomas Strychacz’s *Hemingway’s Theaters of Masculinity* (2003) applies contemporary theories of gender as performed to an examination of the construction of masculinity in Hemingway’s texts, building in part on the ways in which David Bourne must construct his own masculine identity in a novel in which no aspect of “male” identity seems to be taken for granted. Most recently, in *Ernest Hemingway: Machismo and Masochism* (2005), Richard Fantina extends Carl Eby’s work and argues that Hemingway’s career-long interest in male submission and female-on-male sodomy definitively does not extend either into an interest in homosexuality or into female dominance in social spheres. Fantina points out that although Hemingway’s private and public behavior diverged, his masculinity is not necessarily contradictory; in fact, Fantina suggests that “Hemingway’s embodiment of diverse models of masculinity may be his greatest legacy.”

As is made abundantly clear through the book-length works on *Garden*, the richness of criticism of and scholarship on the novel can only be suggested by our selections. There are many excellent and insightful articles that we were not able to include. We thus have appended brief descriptions of most of the essays published in English as of this writing (as found via the MLA International Bibliography). We hope that these will serve the reader of this collection and also the continuing critical conversation regarding Hemingway’s *Garden*.

Since 1986 a re-edited version of *A Moveable Feast* (2009) and two versions of Hemingway’s second African safari—*True at First Light* (1999) and *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005)—have been added to the list of Hemingway’s posthumously published works. Of all the posthumously published works, however, *The Garden of Eden* has proved the most durable and interesting, precisely because it calls into question so much of the received wisdom regarding Hemingway’s persona, life, and writing, and because it encourages readers to question received wisdom both about Hemingway and about themselves. In fact, *Garden* is quickly becoming one
of Hemingway’s most frequently taught works, due in no small part to the way it invites readers to understand his other writings and his role in American life in richer and fuller ways. A Google search suggests that at the college level *Garden* is now the fourth most frequently taught Hemingway work, behind *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *In Our Time*. A similar search reveals that *Garden* is now taught as often as Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*, Henry James’s *The Portrait of a Lady*, and William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*.\(^1\)

Anecdotally, we have found interest in the novel to be high in the classroom. Although initially students struggle with the seemingly superficial and repetitive emphasis on suntanning, eating, and haircuts, with a little guidance and encouragement, they find much in the novel that deeply engages them. In particular, Hemingway’s candid struggle with issues of gender and sexuality speaks to students growing up with greater awareness of sexual and gender choices. They are also sympathetic to the gender politics—personal and professional—that may have prevented Hemingway, the iconic male author, from finishing and publishing *The Garden of Eden* during his lifetime. Women and men are intrigued by the character of Catherine and struggle with whether or not she is crazy and to what extent her behavior is attributable to the limitations on and expectations of women in the first half of the twentieth century, and to what extent those limitations and expectations may still be in place in today. Some are deeply moved by the elephant hunt story both in terms of the limiting definitions of masculinity that it reveals and in terms of what they perceive to be Hemingway’s critique of exploitation and capitalism as the father kills the elephant in front of his young son in order to gain the wealth represented by its ivory tusks. As such the elephant hunt episode speaks not only to recent interest in masculinity studies but also to the intersection among postcolonial, economic, and ecological criticism.

Ultimately, students and other readers grapple with *The Garden of Eden* precisely because it represents Hemingway’s own struggle with many of these issues and speaks to their suspicion that socially constructed identity markers are often limiting and false. The novel’s lack of easy resolutions, clear-cut heroes, and a stable ground on which to base critical judgments makes it likely that vibrant discussions of *The Garden of Eden* will continue well into the future. This collection is our attempt to show what the critical conversation has entailed and to provide a launching point for the conversation to follow.

### Notes

1. We are indebted to Carl Eby for the findings of this Google search.