

ANALYSIS

HOW FEMINISTS CENSORED

The Garden of Eden (1986)

Ernest Hemingway

(1899-1961)

FALSE STEREOTYPE

Feminists reduced Hemingway to an “icon of masculinity”—a stereotypical Macho Man: “With the rise of the women’s movement in the 1960s and of feminist criticism in departments of literature, Hemingway became Enemy Number One for many critics, who accused him of perpetuating sexist stereotypes in his writing.” (Rena Sanderson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 1996: 171) “Hemingway’s work must be distrusted from the outset, not simply because he debases women and glorifies masculinity, but because within his self-imposed limitation of defining masculinity and femininity he fails to transcend superficial cultural definitions.... He treats exclusively male conflicts.” (Marcia Holly, *Feminist Literary Criticism*, 1975: 43-4) “Since he rarely wrote of women with sympathy, and virtually never with subtlety and understanding, feminist charges of misogyny are surely justified.” (Joyce Carol Oates, “The Hemingway Mystique,” *Woman Writer*, 1988: 303)

On the contrary, throughout his career Hemingway repeatedly identified with women characters and dramatized their problems while criticizing males in their lives: See especially the women in “Up in Michigan,” “On the Quai at Smyrna,” “Indian Camp,” “The End of Something,” “Cat in the Rain,” “Hills Like White Elephants,” “The Light of the World,” *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *To Have and Have Not*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Garden of Eden*. Actually, Hemingway is the most egalitarian writer in American literary history. “In the United States, it’s a cottage industry to produce books about how terrible Hemingway was.... There is a deep, deep hatred of Ernest Hemingway in the American literary community.” (novelist Thomas McGuane, *The Missouri Review* 9.1: 1985-86)

“When potential readers reject Hemingway as indifferent to minorities and hostile to women, they are often responding not to Hemingway’s fiction, but to the indifference and hostility of some of his early critics,” Susan F. Beegel explains. Beegel graphed the number of “scholarly articles and books about Hemingway produced annually from 1961 until 1991” as rising steadily except for a dip in 1984-85, when Feminists and other leftists “overreacted to Reaganism with an intolerance labeled ‘political correctness,’ an effort to silence alternative views and dictate values.” Due to Feminist intimidation, “In the early 1980s literary critics as a whole seemed uninterested in Hemingway.” (*Cambridge Companion*: 290, 286) “The feminists who follow this tack assume the same premises as the most chauvinist of male critics who are glad to see Catherine dead.... The history of the critical views of Catherine Barkley is a case study of the ways in which the personal and cultural values of critics, their unstated premises and hidden (even unconscious) agenda can color and cloud our perception.” (Sandra Whipple Spanier, *New Essays on A Farewell to Arms*, 1990: 78, 100)

FEMINISTS CENSOR MALES

“Feminists do exercise power in the form of moral censorship, determining limits to what is and is not sayable.... Feminist moral authority acts as a censoring super-ego.” (Zoe Sofia, *Arena Magazine* 4 (April/May 1993) “Long before the term ‘political correctness’ gained currency...ideological policing was a common feature of Women’s Studies programs...now there is great pressure for conformity...graphically illustrated by widespread exclusion of male authors from course syllabi, assigned reading lists, and citations in scholarly papers...a systematic refusal to read or respond to male authors.” (Daphne Patai & Noretta Koertge, former instructors of Women’s Studies, *Professing Feminism*, 1994: 2,3,5) “John Baker, Editor-in-Chief of *Publisher’s Weekly*, points to a peculiar bias that hangs over many an editorial desk. ‘A lot of editors in publishing are women,’ he says, ‘and there are certain authors they regard as anti-woman or misogynist. They will not accept work from these authors regardless of their actual status. They simply

will not take them on.' It's certainly distasteful to read of a personal attack on one's gender, but don't these editors have a greater responsibility to readers than to censor because of personal distaste?

FEMINISTS CENSOR KINGSLEY AMIS (1984)

Baker points to Kingsley Amis, the British novelist, as one who is on the receiving end of this editorial bias. 'He's enormously successful in England, but, believe it or not, his books are published in America very slowly, if at all, and I think that's largely because he is relentlessly misogynist. He thinks rather poorly of women, his men characters are invariably sexist, chauvinist [unlike Hemingway, an egalitarian who loves women], and I think a number of women editors have gotten together and said, 'no Amis around here!'... 'Bookbanning certainly comes into play with political things from the sex point of view'..." (William Noble, *Bookbanning in America*, 1990: 174-75)

SYSTEM OF CENSORSHIP

"For twenty-five years, give or take a few, we have lived with this system of silent censorship. We have seen the refinement and perfection of this system, in which publishers have joined hands... Now that rules of censorship have been codified, editors, writers, and illustrators know well in advance what is not acceptable. No one speaks of 'censoring' or 'banning' words or topics; they 'avoid' them. The effect is the same.... By now, the rules and guidelines could be dismissed, and they would still function because they have been deeply internalized by the publishing industry. George Orwell and Franz Kafka would have understood this system perfectly; it works best when it permeates one's consciousness and no longer needs to be explained or defended. The goal of the language police is not just to stop us from using objectionable words but to stop us from having objectionable thoughts....

...editors at the big publishing companies often agreed quietly with the feminists and civil rights groups that attacked their textbooks; by and large, the editors and the left-wing critics came from the same cosmopolitan worlds and held similar political views.... Nor did they oppose feminist demands...which had the tacit or open support of their own female editors. In retrospect, this dynamic helps to explain why the major publishing companies swiftly accepted the sweeping...claims of feminist critics and willingly yielded to a code of censorship.... Literary quality became secondary to representational issues.... By the end of the 1980s, every publisher had complied with the demands of the critics.... (Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police*, 2003: 158, 87, 96)

FEMINISTS REWRITE ANYTHING

"[Novelist Dale] Peck's argument is that 'editing has been corrupted by the new...mandates of publishing—or, at least, is more prone to a precautionary principle that dictates that if there are any reasons why a reader might not like something in a book, say an unsympathetic character, then there is a case for demanding the author get rid of the unsympathetic character.' 'The list of things you can't do grows longer and longer,' adds Lisa Dierbeck." (Trevor Butterworth, *Financial Times*, FT.com, 2011) "Lawrence Watson [assistant dean, Harvard]...said it was important that 'some great works be revised' because of their portrayal of women and minorities. 'We've got to take the, quote, great works, unquote, and rewrite them....'" (Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education*, 1991: 218-19)

FEMINIST EXECUTIVES

By 1984 Scribner's had lost touch with the reading public and declined to the point that it was sold to Macmillan, sold its bookstore on Fifth Avenue, and moved into cheaper offices. Mildred Marmur was hired from Random House as Publisher and President and she brought in Christine Previtt from the Literary Guild as Editor-in-Chief—examples of the many women rising to the top in publishing houses during the 1980s. In 1985 Scribner's had only one bestseller, *The Dangerous Summer* by Hemingway. Their best opportunity to make quick money was a long unfinished novel by Hemingway, *The Garden of Eden*. Scribner's had no editor willing or able to edit the book and had to go recruiting. They needed an editor willing to turn a complex unfinished literary novel into something sexy that would sell, someone willing to

risk destroying his career by reducing Hemingway to trash. It had to be a man because everyone knew that Feminist women had been trashing Hemingway for decades.

MALE FEMINIST EDITOR

Marmur and Previtt selected a fiction editor at *Esquire* named Tom Jenks. Out of all the editors in the world they hired an inexperienced editor only 35 years old who had no scholarly or literary credentials and had never edited a novel before to edit the last novel by one of the greatest writers in world literature. Jenks was a construction worker for 10 years before graduating from college. For some reason he got accepted as a male editor by the Feminists running *The Paris Review* and then moved up to *Esquire*, once a men's magazine that published Hemingway, now a politically correct male Feminist publication catering to women. Out of all the editors in the world Jenks was selected from *Esquire* to give the appearance of fairness to Hemingway and to shift responsibility for butchering his book to a fall guy. The novelist William Kennedy wrote to Jenks cautioning him to "invest in a bulletproof vest." (Eric Pooley, "How Scribner's Crafted a Hemingway Novel" [1986], *narrative magazine.info/pages/eden*: 2/5/2011)

Jenks agreed to edit *The Garden of Eden* in order to get hired at Scribner's where he hoped to edit contemporary fiction. He said his first response to the job offer was, "I don't care if I never see another Hemingway story again." He did not want his prospective employers to think he liked Hemingway. Jenks says he declined the offer twice "believing that there was enough bad Hemingway in the world." As a rule editors are not assigned to edit writers they dislike. In the case of Hemingway, Jenks understood that it was a job requirement. Only an editor who had contempt for Hemingway would agree to steal, rewrite and degrade his last novel to advance his own career, then accuse his victim of "self-aggrandizement." Charles Scribner, Jr., who ran his formerly great family business into the ground, said that Jenks was hired in part because he was ignorant. He was not among those millions of readers and scholars with a high regard for Hemingway—"the Hemingway cult," as Scribner called them, displaying his own contempt for the writer and his readers who had made millions for the Scribner family. (Pooley)

Jenks said he had not read *Islands in the Stream*, the dishonestly edited unfinished novel that Scribner's exploited after Hemingway died and could not prevent it. That book got poor reviews and damaged Hemingway's reputation, but Charles Scribner, Jr. was happy because it made him a lot of money anyway. Jenks acknowledged that he had not read any Hemingway novel in years. It is clear from his article in *Harper's* (May 1999) that like other Feminists who have stereotyped Hemingway, Jenks has never read his writing at all. In fact, like most Feminists, he appears to have never read much literature by anyone. Only someone who had never taken an introduction to literature course would say that the darkness in Hemingway's fiction is "infantile."

Jenks could not have read the works cited above with attention and call Hemingway a "misogynist." He is making a Feminist stock response—knee-jerk conformity to slander—as he does in claiming that "Papa is hard on women unless they are subservient and adoring." This contradicts his hype of *The Garden of Eden* praising the "new, sensitive Hemingway" who shows "tenderness and vulnerability." Jenks talks out of one side of his mouth and then the other. Nor could he have read *A Farewell to Arms* and said, as he does in *Harper's*, that there is no love or intimacy in Hemingway. He could not have read *The Sun Also Rises* (see Chapter XIX) and call Hemingway "anti-Semitic." Jenks knows almost nothing about Hemingway except insulting falsehoods. His rewrite of *The Garden of Eden* illustrates how he advanced his career by making Feminist stock responses.

In his *Harper's* piece Jenks demonstrates how far out of touch he is with literature, literary history and the popularity of writers. Patting the Nobel laureate on the head in condescension then biting his ankle, Jenks declares that Hemingway's "literary importance is equivocal"—inferior to Eudora Welty. "He appeals especially to the young, or to that which remains adolescent in readers." He is "a writer of few ideas," too "stupid to think life out," lacking "intellectual rigor," a man "without reflection." "Plotting, which depends on thinking, was never his strong point." Hemingway "had only one character—himself." An "icon of masculinity," he was just a swaggering "adolescent" with "character disorders," guilty of homophobia. He degenerated into a drunken "fat old man," just "ridiculous" and "silly."

CRITICAL REACTION

"Hemingway's publisher has committed a literary crime...this volume is a travesty." (Barbara Probst Solomon, "Where's Papa?" *The New Republic* (9 March 1987: 30) "This cannot have been the book Hemingway envisioned." (E. L. Doctorow, "Braver than We Thought," *The New York Times Book Review* (18 May 1986): 1,44-45) "Were the scrupulous craftsman still alive, no case of vodka could ease the pain the publication of this novel would cause." (Lorian Hemingway, "Ernest Hemingway's Farewell to Art," *Rolling Stone* 275, 5 June 1986: 42) "Two thirds of the manuscript is missing. These massive cuts fall into three broad categories: thematic losses, structural losses, and the loss of Hemingway's original ending. There are other problems as well, involving interpolated scenes and dialogue, additions, cuts of whole chapters and the combination of chapters. Hemingway's authorial intentions have been trampled in order to produce a commercially viable text, resulting in a book that is Jenks', not Hemingway's." (Susan M. Seitz, "The Posthumous Editing of Ernest Hemingway's Fiction," Ph.D. diss., U. Massachusetts, 1993: 180-81) "As Michael Reynolds sums up, the novel 'bears so little resemblance to the book Hemingway wrote that scholars can speak only to the manuscript versions.'" (Kelli A. Larson, *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway*, Oxford, 2000: 218)

FEMINIST REVISIONS

As documented by Susan Seitz in her dissertation, Jenks censored two thirds of the book, cut out half the characters, removed whole sections, combined chapters, rearranged passages, interpolated scenes, switched dialogue from one character to another, added words to sex scenes, removed the main symbols, changed the tragic ending to a happy one, and reversed the meaning of the novel. Cutting out half the characters—the Sheldons and their friend Andy—eliminated dramatic interactions and thematic parallels between the Sheldons and the Bournes that gave psychological depth, complexity, and dramatic force to the novel. It also removed aesthetic counterpoint, thematic development, significant characterization, and irony. Jenks stripped a complex psychological novel down to a sex romp. As reported by Eric Pooley, "Jenks had to make the book his own." Then, no kidding, Jenks actually said, "I did only what I thought Hemingway would have done." After trashing *The Garden of Eden*, in his *Harper's* article Jenks went on to trash the author and all his other works.

Jenks censored two thirds of the manuscript in order to (1) produce a commercial novel that is short, shallow, and sexy—"a good read"; (2) please his employers and other Feminists whose approval he needed to continue advancing his career; and (3) censor literary content to reduce Hemingway's critical stature, to justify his own rewrite and to reinforce the Feminist stereotype of Hemingway as a "misogynist" while hyping the book like a tabloid expose—Misogynist Caught in Women's Clothes. "The cuts made by Jenks add up to a radically altered *Garden* which is very different in scope and meaning from the book that Hemingway intended." Also, "Hemingway's experiments with theme and style have been suppressed.... Jenks made alterations to Hemingway's prose rhythms as well..." (Seitz 180,155,200)

Three male characters and three female characters, a balance expressing Hemingway's egalitarianism, were reduced to only one male and two females, giving the most Feminist character a starring role. David the only male left is reduced to a passive wimp "totally subject to the powers of women, hapless before temptation and unable to take action in the face of adversity." (E.L. Doctorow 328-29) "Many readers have felt the character of David Bourne to be shallow and merely Catherine's tool (Seitz 199): 'David Bourne does indeed come out sounding rather like the weak slave of a blond dominatrix'." (Solomon 32) "Since David's male friends and their conversations are cut from the work, naturally David seems to be dominated by the women left in his world, Catherine and Marita." (Seitz 199) This subordination of the only male character is consistent with the groupthink of Feminist editors documented by Diane Ravitch in *The Language Police* (2003): To avoid censorship by Feminist editors, writers should not portray any male characters as "strong" or "brave." They should not depict "men as capable leaders," "in active problem-solving roles," nor "in positions of greater authority than women" (Ravitch 183).

Jenks removed the main symbols that express the meanings of Hemingway's novel, Rodin's statue of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and Hieronymous Bosch's allegorical painting *Garden of Earthly Delights*. "This is the heart of Hemingway's *Garden*, yet since Jenks has cut all mention of the Rodin statue, he has

effectively cut the heart out of the novel.... The emphasis on the theme of metamorphosis is thus lost, which changes the meaning of the book. In Jenks' *Garden*, the altered theme of the work could be stated as: 'The age-old view of woman as the cause of original sin. Catherine is a spoiler whose taste in forbidden fruit threatens the private Eden of David's art.' [Seitz quoting R.Z. Sheppard, "The Old Man and the Sea Change," *Time* (26 May 1986) 77] "One effect of the cut of the Rodin reference is the diminishment of Catherine's struggle to form her own identity as separate but equal to David's. This becomes crucial towards the end of the novel, when Catherine burns David's manuscripts. In the Jenks version, her act makes her seem like a crazy, destructive bitch..." (Seitz 182,184) Hemingway created a complex woman character, one of many in his fiction, and a Feminist editor censored her characterization in order to sustain the false stereotype of him as a misogynist.

The title *The Garden of Eden* comes from the Bible, prefiguring a Fall, and *Garden of Earthly Delights* explains the Christian meaning of the novel, depicting sins of the flesh leading to a Fall into a living hell. "The structure of the painting...mirrors the structure of the book." (Seitz 187) Jenks censored Christianity and made his rewrite of the book politically correct—secular, atheistic, shallow, and Feminist. He cut dialogue in which the characters know they are damned. Censoring religion and morality, Jenks glamorizes having promiscuous fun in bed and identifies with the hedonists, whereas Hemingway condemns them as damned like Brett Ashley and Mike Campbell in *The Sun Also Rises*. Yet Jenks accuses Hemingway of being a hedonist. Jenks has acknowledged that he had no "scholarly conscience" and he has demonstrated that he has no conscience at all.

"The ending, too, was denounced, because 'Jenks altered the novel so that it runs counter to the pattern of tragedy Hemingway had been preparing'...." (Seitz quoting Doctorow 172) "Jenks' excisions of the references to Rodin and Bosch as well as the cuts of David's and Catherine's recognition of their own fall reduce the impact of Hemingway's theme. Instead of a tragic, contemporary re-enactment of the fall of Adam and Eve, we have 'a tale of self-abuse, betrayal, and guilt without any real motive, explanation, or justification.' Jenks has cut 'the realization of sin, necessary for punishment; and the final punishment of the main and sub-plot characters' (K. J. Peters, "The Thematic Integrity of *The Garden of Eden*," *The Hemingway Review* 10.2, Spring 1991: 17), with the result that often times these characters seem shallow and narcissistic. Ultimately, at least David is rewarded rather than punished for his sin, for he gets a new woman and regains his ability to write.... Both Catherine and David were meant to be punished for their fall." (Seitz 189,199) Jenks rewards David for being a compliant male tool--like himself.

FEMINIST DISMISSAL

Jenks reduced *The Garden of Eden* to his own depth, at the level of superficial pop culture, saying, "The book seems so modern—the characters' haircuts, their clothes, their style. It's 1986's obsession with androgyny. Not Michael Jackson, but almost." By reducing the book to a fashion statement, he set it up for easy dismissal by Feminists as merely a display of cross-dressing: "By the time Hemingway's final text appeared, however, the fashions of the 1980s proclaimed androgyny as an exciting option so that the fashion ideology of his final patriarchal garden seems hopelessly dated." (Marilyn Elkins, "The Fashion of *Machismo*," *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway*, ed. Linda Wagner-Martin, Oxford, 2000: 111)

INSANITY

Jenks is like David in the book, dominated by women and doing whatever his Catherine wants. At the same time, Catherine's destruction of David's manuscripts is comparable to the destruction of *The Garden of Eden*—and many other books--by intolerant Feminist editors who only want to read about themselves. Her narcissism is rewarded with money, freedom, independence, fun in bed, and martyrdom. She is not altogether insane, just on the verge. Her near insanity gives her distinction. Since everything is the fault of men, among Feminists insanity is victimization, self-pity is empowering and survival heroic. *The Mad Woman in the Attic* is a popular book among Feminist academics and "The Yellow Wallpaper" a revered text. To many Feminists logic is oppressive and sanity Patriarchal.

Michael Hollister (2012)

