

Decoding Masculinity: A Critical Analysis of Philip Rawlings in *The Fifth Column*

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Abstract: *This research study critically examines Ernest Hemingway's delineated portrayal of masculinity in his literary iconic play The Fifth Column, vividly focusing on the masculine code, embodied in the protagonist, Philip Rawlings. The paramount objective inextricably tied to this research study is to explicate the Masculine Code embedded in Philip Rawlings' character, probing impeccably how Hemingway's paradigm of Masculinity is constructed and acted out. Qualitative methodology, incorporating 'Close Reading' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis' have been employed, focusing on the suspended information within the text, narrative structures, dialogue, confirming to the historical and cultural contexts that shapes the very narrative structure of this play. This research study's findings brings forth a conspicuous array of masculine attributes videlicet, determination, patriotism, emotional aptitude, and self-control undoubtedly, reflected in Rawlings character. A full-dress analysis also reveals that the portrayal of masculinity is inextricably tied to both cultural and historical settings of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).*

In conclusion, this research study provides a comprehensive insight into its implications, empowering our holistic understanding of masculinity paradigm both in literature and culture, respectively.

Keywords: Masculinity, fifth column, (counter) espionage, apotheosis, emotional restraint, Ernest Hemingway

Introduction

gripping representation of war, politics, and human relationships, set amidst the ravaging *Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)*. This play strategically marks the covert counter-espionage operation, carried out by an American counter-espionage agent, Philip Rawlings, unflinchingly operates under the umbrella of Republican espionage quarter, masquerading as a war correspondent. He covertly operates, carrying out his counter-espionage operation out of Florida hotel, tracking down the members of *Fifth Column*, operating in the vicious guise of the 'fascist' sympathizers to dilapidate the Loyalist Madrid. After comprehending a fifth column mole, and subjecting him to an intense and excruciating interrogation, unearthing a malicious chain of more than three hundred fifth columns.

Literally speaking, a "*fifth column*" is a clandestine spy network, strategically equipped to undermine a larger group or a nation from within, usually in favor of an enemy group or the nation. Clandestine fifth column pernicious activities involve, sabotage, disinformation, misinformation, espionage, and

terrorism, tactically executed within defense lines by secret sympathizers coordinated by an external force. Historically speaking, the term “fifth column” originated in Spain (primarily, *Quinta Columna*) amidst the initial phase of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It gained popularity in the Republican faction media in early October, 1936 and immediately started to saturate global discourses.

Philip Rawlings, the protagonist of Ernest Hemingway’s play, *The Fifth Column*, literally encodes a masculine paradigm, inextricably tied to the recurring motifs of courage, determination, stoicism, emotional intelligence, and *grace under pressure*. These traits are categorically reflected in Philip Rawlings’ strong personality after he exhibits an insurmountable intrepidity in the face of impending dangers with its drastic ramifications unleashed by the fascist espionage activities. This masculine ideal finds its essence in his reserved attitude towards Dorothy Bridge, essentialising his duty and commitment during war as the top priorities, taking precedence over his personal relationship.

Simply put, Philip Rawlings’ unwavering dedication to his duty and commitment during wartime eclipses his personal relationships, underscoring the primacy of his responsibilities as a counterespionage agent (Bank, 2008).

Masculinity, a Code Hero’s central personality contour, finds a substantial essence in Ernest Hemingway’s portrayal in his literary style, depicting it in a sense where the protagonist, strenuously grapples with his own dogmas and values in the midst of a topsy-turvy conflict, confirming his masculine attitude in such perilous circumstances.

The resilient attitude, a central facet of Masculinity, has been vividly portrayed by Ernest Hemingway in the character of Philip Rawlings, a protagonist, in his compelling work of literature, ‘the fifth column’, grappling with the complexities of war, love, and the betrayal. Here, the masculinity is inextricably tied to an oft-quoted phrase;

“*Men were expected to be strong and brave soldiers.*” (Act 2, p.83-84, 1938).

This opens a new vista on the masculine trait enmeshed in the personality of the protagonist, wading through the complex dilemmas, posing an inevitable repercussions (Summaries, 1992).

Ernest Hemingway has embodied the ‘masculinity paradigm’ in his literary masterpieces, inspiring not only a generation of writers but also an extensive progeny of critics. Espousing this masculinity paradigm, he convincingly asserts that this ideal primarily accentuates on eschewing women, courting death and danger, and depicts ‘*man as alone and as a loner*’ in a hostile and unpredictable universe. Contextually speaking, a masculine code, a paradigmatic trait, is central in context of accomplishing the cherished objectives on part of the protagonist, overshadowing trivial concerns. Additionally, Ernest Hemingway’s masculinity-driven Code hero must be described as a ‘*one man army*’, accepting all the knotty challenges, regardless of any agency, worth-trusting.

“*We are told, for instance, that Ernest Hemingway is the “apotheosis” of the purely forceful, tense and thrusting component of maleness.*” (Rosen field, 149).

This offers valuable perspectives on a myriad of masculinity inspired tenets, suggesting that Ernest Hemingway, an erudite American novelist, story-writer, and a journalist of the twentieth century, embodies the totality of traditional masculinity traits, particularly, simplicity, clarity, a sense of intensity and power, emotional restraint and stoicism, assertiveness and dominance, and the thrusting facet of maleness. Ernest Hemingway had an incisive introspection regarding the masculine paradigm, focusing on two paradigmatic characters, the tyro and the tutor, and these iconic figures literally lived by a rigid code, necessitating enduring pain, defying death, and living without the company of other man, or women. Contextually speaking, Ernest Hemingway’s character is strategically obligated to encode both the *tyro (apprentice or novice)* and the *tutor (mentor or guide) prototype*. After encoding these masculine archetypes, Hemingway’s paradigmatic character represents an intricate and refined

disquisition of masculine identity, reflecting both the travail and unpredictability of shaping up a man accompanied by the responsibility to lead and mentor others in their own masculinity destination.

“*We have been told that Hemingway’s female character are ‘boring and unreal’*” (Kriegel, 420).

Femininity, in Hemingway’s literary masterpieces, doesn’t find any soft corner, receiving strong critique, considering females as unassertive, stereotypical, and devoid of emotional intelligence. Hemingway’s attitude towards female character in his literary folk-wisdom is not satisfactory, representing female as ‘baseless’ and ‘unrealistic’. Like a masculine ideal, women are devoid of coping mechanism, incapacitated to turn violent situations into opportunities, demanding resilience, emotional restraint, and assertiveness. To make it worse, elsewhere in Ernest Hemingway’s work, female characters are often objectified, reduced to their physical appearance, and used as a commodity, fulfilling male sensual gratifications.

Masculine virtues of courage, dignity, and imperturbable fortitude, have been convincingly gratified by Ernest Hemingway as the paramount traits, enmeshed in the masculine code of male character, diametrically opposed to the femininity, a persona non grata in Hemingway’s eyes. Simply put, in his bad books (Sullivan, 1986).

Examining the masculine paradigm exhibited by the male character of Ernest Hemingway in the context of the biological cycle of birth-procreation-death, the paradigmatic character of *the Fifth Column* play, the protagonist, Philip Rawlings, is incessantly grappling with disturbing this biological cycle via emotional detachment, maintain a maximal distance especially, from women, hindering or jeopardizing his hidden motives. *Domesticity* is also considered as a limiting factor, confining him to the orbit of the biological cycle. Contrary to domesticity, Ernest Hemingway masterfully encodes the essence of nomadic lifecycle in his glorified character, embracing a wide spectrum of impending challenges lurking in the unpredictable climate of war and violence. Ernest Hemingway incorporates a notion of ‘*illusion of control*’, a cardinal thematic element, showing a strong sense of autonomy, determining his own destiny, cutting through the hindrances produced by birth, procreation and death. Additionally, the masculine character, Philip Rawlings, is encoded with the *illusion of invincibility*, where the protagonist holds a firm belief that he can outfox the death, surpassing the set limitations of human experiences.

In the fifth column, Philip Rawlings, a code hero, strategic in his vision and mission, struggles hard to successfully cut through the biological cycle, confirming to the masculine ideal of emotional detachment, rejection of domesticity, and an unflinching attitude towards war and its ramifications. His illusion of control and invincibility determine his actions and his strategic maneuvers carried out tactically to sabotage the espionage tactics employed by the enemies, transcends the natural barriers impeding human life (Vince, 1971).

Ernest Hemingway has exhibited *misogynistic* tendencies towards female, glorifying it as a hallmark of his literary style, considering female as unrealistic and submissive sex objects, fulfilling males’ sensual desires. This can be vividly noticed after we navigate through the complexities of gender and identity where the male character is portrayed as emotionally strong and resilient. The depiction of female protagonist, Dorothy Bridges, as an opulent, promiscuous, and emotionally unstable figure, is a definitive sign of the fact that she is carrying some negative stereotypes in connection with women, mislabeling them as weak, dependent, and manipulative.

Hemingway’s intention regarding stereotypical portrayal of female character, Dorothy Bridge, is primarily driven by a broad societal context reinforced by the patriarchal values (Hasnain, 1981).

Militarized code of behavior among men, confronting war is undoubtedly, coincides with the masculine paradigm espoused by Ernest Hemingway in his literary style in context of military espionage, sabotaging the subversive activities covertly and overtly launched by the Nazi fascist sympathizers,

supporting fifth columns hell-bent on destroying the Loyalist Madrid. The protagonist, exhibiting a militarized code of behavior, reflecting the societal norms of masculinity amidst Spanish Civil War (1936-39). This militarized code of behavior encodes a myriad of masculine traits: emotional restraint, serving as a defense mechanism, emotional detachment, keeping a distance from his beloved one, Dorothy Bridge, and his misogynistic attitude towards women, particularly, Dorothy Bridge, is characterized by objectification and a lack of emotional intimacy. Militarized code of behavior, generally speaking, favors the trait of exhibiting aggression, and dominance, already comes under the toxic masculinity, a key facet of militarized code of behavior on part of the protagonist.

“Hemingway’s fictional characters combine with their historical counterparts to disrupt the oppositional categorization of masculinity versus femininity upon which the rhetoric of war is contingent upon.” (Schebetta, p.3, 2010).

Last but not the least, this masculinity code of behavior is deeply rooted in the conventional masculine ideal, harnessing the essence of toxic masculinity, and limiting the emotional expression (Schebetta, 2010).

Discussion and Analysis.

Ernest Hemingway, an eminent American literary icon of the twentieth century, is credited with writing many seminal works, exploring different motifs. Among these literary masterpieces is his seminal creation in the form of a play *the fifth column*. This play strategically marks the covert counter-espionage activities carried out by an American counter-espionage agent, Philip Rawling, devotedly operates under the umbrella of Republican espionage quarter, masquerading as a war correspondent. He covertly operates, carrying out his counter-espionage operation out of Florida hotel, tracking down the members of Fifth Column, operating in the vicious guise of the ‘fascist’ sympathizers to dilapidate the Loyalist Madrid. After comprehending the fifth column mole, his intense interrogations lead him to expose the malicious chain of more than three hundred fifth column.

Literally speaking, a ‘fifth column’ is a clandestine spy network strategically equipped to undermine a larger group or a nation from within, usually in favor of an enemy group or the nation. ‘Clandestine fifth column’ pernicious activities involve sabotage, disinformation, espionage, and terrorism masterfully executed within defense lines by secret sympathizers with an external force. Historically speaking, the term “fifth column” originated in Spain (primarily Quinta Columna) amidst the initial phase of the Spanish Civil War. It gained popularity in the Republican faction media in early October 1936 and immediately started to spread abroad.

This play literally offers a refined introspection of the masculine code, a set of societal expectations defining conventional masculinity.

Ernest Hemingway’s paradigmatic character, Philip Rawlings, literally encodes the masculine paradigm, exhibiting emotional intelligence and restraint in the face of life-threatening challenges throughout his counter-espionage activities, choreographed against the fascist sympathizers. Such unpredictable situations demand a unique trait – ‘*grace under pressure*’. Under such challenging situations, the character is not threatened by the impending challenges but he takes them as an opportunity, turning them into advantages. His reserved nature strategically serves as a defensive mechanism, safeguarding against the vulnerability and emotional intimacy. This depiction is a clear crystal manifestation of the fact that traditional masculinity, convincingly favors emotional restraint and dominance.

“I don’t give a damn about anything, and nobody gives a damn about me.” (Act II, p.134)).

However, Ernest Hemingway, on the other hand, strongly critiques this facet of emotional aptitude on part of the protagonist, in context of masculinity. His emotional infringement acts as a double-edged

sword, allowing him to tactically navigate through the intricacies wrecked by both war and espionage, rendering him disconnected from others, particularly, women i.e., Dorothy Bridges. This refined depiction brings forth the pervasive friction between societal expectation of emotional restraint and the human urgency, inextricably linked to the emotional portrayal and connectivity.

This iconic play also explores the intersection between masculinity and the violent means of countering the enemies '*hidden motive*', specifically, in the context of War. The protagonist daring engagement in espionage operation amidst the Spanish Civil War, sacrificing some relationships and inclination towards violent means of sabotaging the '*fascist*' sympathizers' secret agenda is a clear manifestation of the fact that he was confirming to the traditional tenets of masculinity. This gives us a nuanced portrayal of the fact that societal expectations of masculine paradigm drives an individual, adhering to the fundamental tenets of masculine paradigm.

This play critically scrutinizes the intricacies determining the male and female relationship in context of masculine paradigm. The protagonist intimacy with Dorothy Bridges, gives us a new vista via we can explore the lurking friction between traditional masculinity and emotional intimacy.

"I'm very fond of you, and I don't want to hurt you." (Act 2, p. 157)

"You're the only one I've ever loved. Dorothy." (Act 3, p. 221)

Ernest Hemingway has cleverly depicted the emotional bondage, driving the relationship accompanied by its budding challenges. Philip Rawlings sacrifices all these relationships, disrupting this vicious cycle of intimacy. He kept his mission and vision as the top priorities, confirming to the masculine tents.

Last but not the least, this play, the fifth column, offers a thought-provoking exploration of the masculine ideal, highlighting both its perpetuation and critique. Hemingway's refined representation of the conventional masculinity, articulating some significant reservations in connection with the deliberate construction of masculinity and its associated implications for human intimacy and relationship.

In view of this discussion and analysis, it can be safely demonstrated that this iconic play the fifth column, acts as an indispensable lens via we can scrutinize the lurking intricacies associated with masculinity. Additionally, it gives us a vivid perspective via we can wade *through* the complexities associated with gender and identity. This seminal creation remains an insightful and topical reflection on the human condition.

Suggested Quotations.

1. "Courage is grace under pressure."__ Ernest Hemingway.
2. "The world breaks everyone, and afterward, many are strong at the broken places." __ Ernest Hemingway.
3. "To be a man is, precisely, to be responsible."__ Antonie de Saint-Exupe'ry.

Conclusion

To sum up, this critical scrutiny of Ernest Hemingway's iconic (counter) espionage play, the fifth column, offers us a refined approach, cognizing the deep-seated facets of masculinity, portraying the latent intricacies in conventional masculinity paradigm. This critical study brings forth a repertoire of masculine traits strategically exhibited by the protagonist, Philip Rawlings, in the face of rampant travails and tribulations and unpredictability, demanding emotional intelligence, stoicism, misogynistic attitude, intimacy, courage, and grace under pressure. Additionally, this accentuates on some key facets inextricably tied to the paradigm of masculinity, exposing the constant friction between strength and vulnerability, courage and anxiety, and control and cession.

Last but not the least, this study highlights the purport of rethinking traditional masculinity and its

limitation, highlighting the obligation for a more refined and inclusive understanding of male identity. By challenging the overriding narratives of masculinity, we can work towards creating a more *empathetic* and *equitable* society, where individuals are free to express themselves without the repression of societal expectancy.

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“To my caring parents, whose unflinching love and support have been the ultimate guiding forces behind my every successful endeavor.”

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