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**Title**

Masculinity After Trujillo: The Politics of Gender in Dominican Literature by Maja Horn  
(review)

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1x65716s>

**Journal**

Revista de Estudios Hispánicos, 49(3)

**ISSN**

0034-818X

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**Publication Date**

2015

**DOI**

10.1353/rvs.2015.0065

Peer reviewed

**Horn, Maja. *Masculinity after Trujillo: The Politics of Gender in Dominican Literature*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2014. 203 pp.**

Maja Horn's *Masculinity after Trujillo* is an important contribution to Dominican, Caribbean, and Latin American studies. After the introduction, the first chapter "De-tropicalizing the Trujillo Dictatorship and Dominican Masculinity" analyzes speeches by Rafael Trujillo, Joaquín Balaguer, and other nationalist Dominican *letrados* to unearth the keys to the Trujillato's discourse of masculinity, which, according to Horn, was in part a reaction to the long-lasting US occupation of the Dominican Republic and its imposition of a racialized imperial masculinity. The title of chapter two, "One Phallus for Another: Post-dictatorial Political and Literary Canons," is a pun on the title of one of Doris Sommer's books, *One Master for Another: Populism as Patriarchal Rhetoric in Dominican Novels*. In it, the author carries out a close analysis of two novels by Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, *De abril en adelante* and *Uña y carne*, to show how even leftist-leaning Dominican intellectuals reinforced this same rhetoric of masculinity during Balaguer's governments, thus indirectly naturalizing authoritarianism. Horn argues that the attempts by Dominican canonical writers to emasculate the image of Trujillo as the country's most virile man reproduce the same masculinist ideology popularized by his government. In fact, they reduce serious political problems to the sexual prowess of the dictator's phallus. In her view, Veloz Maggiolo and other authors reproduce hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality that limit their vision of political resistance.

The third chapter, "Engendering Resistance: Hilma Contreras's Counter-narratives," rescues Contreras's important counter-narratives of resistance, which challenge mainstream notions of honor, masculinity, and sexuality, and propose the recovery of the Trujillato's cultural practices for anti-hegemonic ends. Horn focuses on the representation of Dominican gender formations in three works by Contreras: *4 cuentos*, *Doña Endrina de Calatayud*, and *La tierra está bramando*. She also looks at how Dominican cultural practices foster anti-hegemonic alliances and collective forms of action. According to the author, Contreras's writing presents silence as a site of resistance during the Trujillato. Her novel *La tierra está bramando* provides examples of strategies of resistance, such as the strategic use of femininity (being seen as a harmless and apolitical subject) beyond masculinist cultural logics and hyper-sexualized imaginary. The author proposes the recovery of the Trujillato's cultural practices for anti-hegemonic ends and proves that the return of the Dominican diaspora has, in many cases, reinforced hegemonic, masculinist Dominican notions.

The last two chapters explore the effects of globalization, neoliberalism, the tourism industry, global media, mass migration, and diaspora on a new generation of Dominican and Dominican American writers that emerged in the 1990s. In particular, Horn is interested in their critique of the discourse of gender and other hegemonic formations inherited from the Trujillato. "Still Loving *Papi*: Globalized Dominican Subjectivities in the Novels of Rita Indiana Hernández" studies Hernández's portrayal of new Dominican subjectivities in her novels *La estrategia de la Chochueca* and *Papi*. The chapter that closes the book before the conclusion,

“How Not to Read Junot Díaz: Diasporic Dominican Masculinity and Its Returns,” is perhaps the strongest in the book. According to Horn, Díaz and Hernández show in their works the enduring desirability of hegemonic notions of masculinity for both Dominican men and women, even in the diaspora. *Masculinity after Trujillo*, therefore, provides an insightful look at the persistent power of masculinism in Dominican post-dictatorship politics and literature, as a result of the US occupation’s collective emasculation of the Dominican male that revitalized nationalist sentiments. Horn’s study of hegemonic discourses from the perspective of the politics of gender reveals often overlooked aspects of Veloz Maggiolo’s and Díaz’s writing. In particular, she shows how these authors reproduce traditional, hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality that limit their vision of political resistance.

*Masculinity after Trujillo* covers an important body of literature and culture from a hitherto neglected perspective: that of the politics of gender in the Caribbean. It also rescues from oblivion literary texts by Dominican women writers that had been surprisingly overlooked by critics. It is a theoretically sound study that resorts to theories of gender and hegemony by Laclau, Mignolo, Moreiras, and others from a critical perspective. More specifically, it expands the study of the masculinization of power in both Dominican politics and literature that so far had only been hinted at by other critics. The author also attempts to “de-tropicalize” the Trujillato, masculinism, and the literature that has narrated them (Tropicalization being the Latin American version of Orientalism). One of the most original contributions of this study is its emphasis on the influence of US gendered and racial ideology in Dominican politics. It also devotes an entire chapter to the problematic role of intellectuals during the Trujillato and afterward. Of particular interest are the chapters on masculinist language in Veloz Maggiolo’s and Díaz’s literature, together with the re-discovery of Contreras’s counternarratives, which re-write traditional notions of honor, gender, and sexuality.

Horn concentrates on how globalization has impacted local gender formations in the Dominican Republic. She argues, however, that it would be reductionistic to find causes only in the everlasting, traditional, patriarchal culture with roots in the Hispanic colonial past. Instead, the plausible roots are in the Trujillo dictatorship’s discourse of hyperbolic masculinity. However, the Trujillato also meant a break with Dominican traditions that enabled US imperialism to further influence Dominican culture. The author argues that the US military occupation paved the way for the Trujillato, as it represented a collective emasculation of the Dominican male that exacerbated nationalist sentiments. Unlike most previous studies, which focus mainly on Spanish colonialism and the controversial sharing of the island with Haiti, *Masculinity after Trujillo* underscores the understudied and lasting influence of US colonialism and how it prepared the terrain for Trujillo’s hyperbolic language of masculinity. From this point in history on, masculinity and Dominican nationalism became inseparable and embraced by both Dominican men and women. Overall, this is an outstanding and necessary book, with a brilliant cultural, historical, and political contextualization of the literature examined. *Masculinity after Trujillo* covers important lacunae in previous scholarship on Dominican post-dictatorship literature.