

Failed Masculinities in Rulfo's *El llano en llamas*

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In this paper I describe Juan Rulfo's different masculine models as presented in the collection *El llano en llamas* (1953). Rulfo's well known collection of short stories tells of the disillusion and violence that followed the Mexican Revolution; it presents many of its masculine characters as lacking direction or strength, defined by their alienation and impotence. That male weakness is also accompanied by various dark and empty homes, left unprotected by a missing father or strong male figure. In *No oyes ladrar los perros*, *Diles que no me maten* and *La cuesta de las comadres*, Rulfo presents in a cinematographic style a universalized portrait of the Mexican peasant, still deeply rooted in the economic, social and political reality of Mexico. This reality often has weak, abused or absent father figures, male characters that wander aimlessly in search of reestablishing the homes that have been ripped away from them by criminals, regional bosses or the government. In this essay I will examine how those weak and rootless men are constructed in terms of their masculinity, and what the articulation of those masculine characters says about Mexican political and social reality at the time.

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