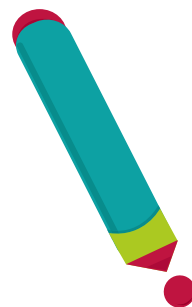


# ***UNVEILING THE SHADOWS: THE URGENCY OF LITERARY CRITICISM IN NARIÑO***

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## Abstract

The article addresses the need for literary criticism in the context of Nariño's literature. It is pointed out that, over time, that the people of Nariño are unaware of their own literature, and the writers and their creations remain anonymous. A documentary review of texts by expert researchers in the area such as Verdugo, España, Villota, Rodríales, whose referents will enrich this paper, was taken into account.

Keywords: Literary criticism, Nariño literature, readers, writers.

## Resumen

El artículo aborda la necesidad de la crítica literaria en el contexto de la literatura nariñense. Se señala que, a lo largo del tiempo, ha habido crítica literaria en Nariño que ha proporcionado perspectivas sobre las corrientes literarias de ciertos años, pero en la actualidad, la crítica literaria es escasa, lo que conduce a que obras y autores sean desconocidos no solo fuera del departamento sino también dentro de él. Cabe señalar que también existen otras variables por las cuales hay desconocimiento de obras y autores, como lo las políticas culturales ineficientes, falta del hábito lector en la población, entre otras. Se destaca también en este escrito la preocupación por cómo los nariñenses desconocen su propia literatura, y los escritores y sus creaciones quedan en el anonimato. Se tuvo en cuenta una revisión documental de textos de investigadores expertos en el área como Verdugo, España, Villota, Rodríales, cuyos referentes enriquecerán este escrito.

Palabras clave: Crítica literaria, literatura nariñense, lectores, escritores.

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to reflect on how literary criticism is necessary in the current boom of literature in Nariño. It is worth considering, on the other hand, that throughout time there has been literary criticism in Nariño that has allowed to give perspectives on the literary currents of certain specific years. But at present it is very scarce to find timely spaces for literary criticism in the Department, giving way to the fact that works and authors are unknown not only for the rest of the country, but also within the Department itself. In fact, it is worrying how people from Nariño themselves are unaware and ignore the literature of their Department; the writers remain in total anonymity, covered by the layer of oblivion and the same happens with their creations that they have created with effort.

With this text we seek to investigate why a literary criticism is necessary in Nariño, as this is closely related to the reason why people from Nariño themselves are unaware of their own literary productions. In order to reach this reflective approach, authors and works such as: Verdugo, *"Configuración del discurso de la crítica de la literatura en Nariño en el siglo XX"*, Chaves, *De la ausencia de la crítica literaria en Nariño, España*, *La literatura nariñense*, Verdugo, *Sobre el canon y la canonización de la narrativa en Nariño en el siglo XX*, all the works mentioned were used in order to make a relevant contribution with their theories within this reflection, and also the references used in this paper will allow, in certain way, to explain the importance that literary criticism contributes in our Department in the literary area.

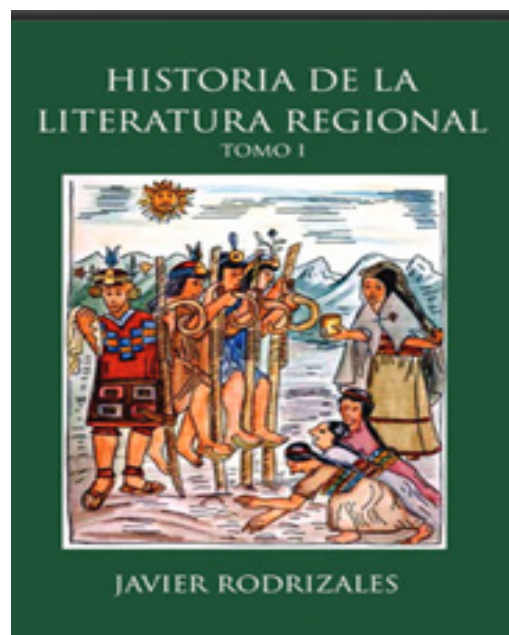
## Theoretical Framework

### Literature from Nariño.

When speaking of regional literature, it is important to highlight the text, "History of Regional Literature, Volume 1", where the author mentions the following definition of literature:

Literature in all its manifestations, was born out of the need to communicate something. A literary work is a form of communication that uses oral or written language. In America and Europe, the notions of ethno-literature, oral literature, oral literature, orature and literature of oral tradition are also used. In general, literature is considered as an artistic form of communication, through which an author expresses ideas and/or feelings with a specific purpose that depends on his or her intentionality. It is a communication way, in that it requires the ordinary elements of all communication (sender, receiver, channel, context, code and message), and it is artistic because it is creative. All literary works are, in themselves, highly structured acts of communication. There is a sender (the author), and a receiver (the reader) and, although there are numerous literary genres with their particularities and characteristics, there is a code more or less general to all, which is what is known as literary language. Each communication factor will determine a function of language, which has to do with the importance that each of them acquires in a communicative situation. Each factor adapts its function to the literary fact. The sender fulfills above all an expressive function, the message moves away from the denotation and the referential function because of its fictional character, the receiver has to decode the content knowing keys of the author, the historical period... All this is due to the literary text central function, which is called poetic function, which is the main function in poetry, narrative and dramatic work (Rodríales, 2018, p.9).

**Image 1.** Rodrízales, History of regional literature.



Now, when we talk about literature, the great classic European writers come to mind, then we slowly move on to the great Spanish writers, then our mind goes to the Latin-American authors, to take a step to our great Colombian writers, and when we move on to our writers from Nariño, our mind becomes a blank page where the only author that shines is Aurelio Arturo or in some cases nothing appears, there is only a desert of authors. Now, it is known that if the author dies, the work remains, but what happens if in the memory of the people the work and the author are submerged in oblivion, this is the literature of Nariño case. Probably a large amount of people will claim that this is not the case, and it is accepted their reasons whether from claiming that there are databases and there are libraries in the Department that keep copies of the works. However, the following doubt arises, if the cultural area of Nariño does not actively discuss active works and authors from Nariño, and much less the curricula of schools in the Department of Nariño dare to include any work from the region in their classrooms, how can we expect people to know the writing of their region? That is, you cannot expect a large amount of people to go to the libraries and borrow regional books that do not even know about their existence. Nevertheless, what has just been mentioned may be extreme for many, but it happens and continues to happen. In other words, the works are over there, but the readers are dispersed; here the following author points out that: *"We must think that literature of Nariño has the will to be a cultural system anchored in the Colombian literature. (Spain, 2022, para.1)"* and in a certain way the mentioned above is a painful truth, a small thorn that became a great wound made by people from Nariño themselves, since, on the one hand, literature in Nariño is not anchored to Colombian literature, but equally it is not anchored in its own people. The depth of this was certainly influenced by not having a literary criticism adequate to the needs of the literature of ancient and modern time. To this date the need for literary criticisms is obviated and few people want to embark on that path. Many prefer being a writer rather than being a

literary critic and it is understandable because there is a huge burden behind accepting that role. On this point, another researcher mentions Mauricio Chaves Bustos, observing the absence of criticism, which is also due, although it will be the theme of another essay, to the publishing policy deficit in our country, especially in the peripheries, where those who have money or are friends with the mayor can publish. (Chaves, 2021, para.6)".

Here, as the author mentions, there are no efficient publishing policies in Colombia either. This hinders the public access to the books, and it is relevant to mention that there is no work dissemination due to other factors in addition to the above mentioned, such as:

- \* Inefficient or non-existent cultural policies
- \* Resource for reeditions paucity.
- \* Reading habit absence among the population
- \* Good reading habit scarcity among the population
- \* Good reading habit dearth among the public.

So it can be affirmed that it does not depend 100% on the critics of Nariño to ensure that the works reach the public, but a high percentage does. In this section we must stop to reflect on whether it is appropriate to continue in the same routine that is repeated year after year to train writers without wanting to train literary critics to help reach others works. the reality that emerges is turbulent, since it is desired that the literature of Nariño advance, but not even the first steps are taken to train literary critics to be the bridge of the work with the readers, thanks to its review, is then the question arises, are the people from Nariño in a maze without wanting to see the way out? The answer could be affirmative, because there is no clear reason why neither the academy, nor the culture, nor the society of Nariño have made the attempt to create literary critics, there is a very evident need, there are more writers than literary critics in the Department of Nariño, that is already clear. It is necessary to mention that in other zones of the country there is a huge number of literary critics who have been interested in the literature of Nariño and have commented on it, then, why do the same people from Nariño refuse the possibility of being literary critics? And this is not denying that there are critics from Nariño, there are and have been, such as the renowned Jorge Verdugo Ponce, but why are there not as many as the literature of Nariño needs? In accordance with the above, the writing, *"Sobre el canon y la canonización de la narrativa en Nariño en el Siglo XX"* shows us a vision of why Nariño is not homogeneous and perhaps sheds a little light on a possible reason why literary critics are not formed in our region:

*"We are in a region of the South Pacific or heirs of the Great Cauca, survivors of the ordinances of Reyes, characterized by some particularities due to the isolation of the national framework given its abrupt*



*geographical location and the scarce roads and means of communication, making it unknown in the national context. It is a region of great cultural exchanges, since geographically it has an Afro-Colombian belt in the Pacific, a tri-ethnic zone extended by the Western and Central mountain range, considered a patriarchal, romantic, stately, inbred people and also of large landowners. Precisely, if we understand the problem of land tenure as the genesis of territoriality and the conformation of a region, then marked differences arise in sub-regions: the traditional Pastosos and the inhabitants of Túquerres and Ipiales with a great commercial sense and social mobility, on one hand, the inhabitants of the Pacific coast, on the other, the indigenous, etc. contribute to the fact that their characteristics are multiple and not homogeneous, which makes their study and understanding considerably difficult"* (Verdugo, 2004, p. 18).

The above quotation helps to explain one of the possible reasons for the literary criticism insufficiency in Nariño, since, as the author mentions, Nariño is a multiethnic territory, different cultures coexist in the same zone, therefore, that would explain why it is complex to train literary critics in Nariño, because despite being from the same territory, they will have different visions of literature, that is, a Nariño critic from the coast will not have the same worldview as an Andean critic, the education, formation, the culture, and the writing are different in both, from idioms to slang, it is a mistake to compare them, both are equally rich in literature and culture, and therefore it could be complex to train literary critics under a specific literature line. However, it is possible to train literary critics in Nariño, but creating different types of critics.

### **Literary criticism in Nariño**

When a work is created, the author's thoughts are exposed, a world of possibilities opens up. That is something extremely beautiful, but what happens when the work remains there in anonymity? What is the way to follow? The ideal answer is that the work has to be marketed and that is why it is not known, a situation that is partly true. But this is not something that marketing infallibly solves, a proper literary criticism is needed for a text to reach the hands of readers, the easiest way for a book to be read is that there is an intermediary between the work and the reader, this intermediary would be the literary critic. In fact, there are several literary critics who started out as writers, but decided to take on the important role of constructive criticism in literature. An example of this is the writer and critic from Nariño, Cecilia Caicedo. Continuing with this order of ideas, literature needs literary criticism to reach people and not only for this reason, criticism also helps to mature the writing of young writers, although it is necessary to emphasize that criticism should be

constructive and not destructive, since, even if the work fails, it should encourage the writer to remain motivated in the constant exercise of writing. At this point it is necessary to clarify that there is always the fear of how much criticism can affect a work, therefore, in some cases literary criticism is rejected. Based on the above, it can be said that in Nariño literary criticism has not been deeply influenced or instigated in Nariño, and because of this, there are very few people who have been influenced or instigated in literary criticism. Because of this there are very few literary critics, it should be noted that I refer to the fact that there are literary critics, but they are very few in comparison to the large number of works that exist. An example of this is the following: for every twenty literary texts there can only be one literary critic and this is reflected in the fact that of those twenty literary texts only a reduced margin will receive an adequate literary criticism. This hypothetical figure is somewhat worrisome, and it only serves to show the seriousness of the situation, since in reality the figures may be even higher. On the other hand, it is curious to see that almost no literary critics are being forged, but writers are.

Although it should be noted that there are environments from where literary criticism is gestated, as the article *"Literaturas regionales, una cultura desde la interdisciplinariedad de los patrimonios del sur de Colombia"* (Regional literatures, a culture from the interdisciplinarity of southern Colombia heritages) mentions below:

In the 21st century, the creation of these events of literary work dissemination, will correspond to certain guidelines that have as protagonists the digital media, blogs became the epicenter of sustainable criticism work, some only in the exercise of uploading reviews and arguments already quoted by other authors, and the literary contest promotion, as in *"Litnar"* case, *"Literatura nariñense"* (2011), directed by Andrea Ruíz and Alexander Córdoba, likewise, the literature place has been developed by the digital newspaper *"Página 10"* in the regional culture section and with depth in the literary criticism development, the blog of nominee stands out: *"Críticas literarias en Nariño"* (2013), directed by Alexis Uscátegui Narváez and César Eliécer Villota Eraso, at the end of this paragraph and the groups mentioned, within the University of Nariño and with depth in the Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Letters, different research works have been developed within the literary culture, highlighting works and authors such as Evelio José Rosero, Albeiro Arciniegas and Esperanza Cuayal, from the regional literature Diplomas. To this, we must add the great responsibility which was carried out through the Awasca writers' workshop and under the direction of Javier Rodríguez about Aurelio Arturo and the radio program: *"Morada al Sur"*, which, in a

later presentation event, would open the subject: Jorge Verdugo Ponce. (Villota, 2021, p.1)

## Discussion

The above is a deep reflection on how literary criticism is a necessity for the literature of Nariño, that is, a situation that comes from the past. However, this need is ignored and nowadays it can be observed more clearly that literary criticism is necessary, besides being a possible answer for the people of Nariño to recognize their own writings. Every reflection is inscribed in an ignored problem and in this case it is so, because it is intriguing how literary criticism is left aside despite the fact that there are hundreds of books of narrators and poets from Nariño being published nowadays, thanks to the internet or emerging publishers, whether it is any of these reasons or any other, it must be taken into account that these works need to be reviewed to be recognized by the people from Nariño and not to be forgotten.

## Results

As a result, it can be said that there are a number of Nariño researchers who have studied literary criticism from their points of view, so it can be reflected that there are different dimensions from which to observe the literature of Nariño, as the deficit of Nariño critics can reflect, inefficient cultural policies, resource and reading habit absence in the population influence the existence of a fatal lackness of knowledge about our Nariño literature. But it is important to emphasize that this must change, one way is the aforementioned training literary critics, but it must also be reinforced from a government plan where a reading habit policy may be established as a priority to encourage in our children the reading habit, as well as the cultural area may offer workshops about Nariño literature and publish it, for people of all ages, in order to close the gap of regional literary ignorance.

## Conclusions

To conclude, it is extremely important to understand and comprehend that literary creation goes hand in hand with literary criticism, and therefore it is fair to say that a work readership may increase to the extent that such work is recognized by a literary critic who makes it known to others. Here are a number of useful insights if they are taken into account when wanting to understand a little of Nariño literary criticism and how this impacts on the Department literature.

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