

ABSTRACT

The literary portrayal of General Juan Vicente Gómez in *Fiebre* (1939) by Miguel Otero Silva and *En la casa del pez que escupe el agua* (1975) by Francisco Herrera Luque

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This research examines the relation between the ideology of a narrator, the genre within which he writes and the artistic representation of an object; in this case the dictator Juan Vicente Gómez and his regime. This necessitated close readings and in-depth analyses of the two Venezuelan novels *Fiebre* (1939) by Miguel Otero Silva, a testimonial novel and *En la casa del pez que escupe el agua* (1975) by Francisco Herrera Luque, an historical novel. These readings and analyses were done in conjunction with historical accounts of the dictator, critical works on the two novels and theoretical works on the nature of literature.

What became apparent was that the implicit value and belief system of a narrator and the literary genre do affect the portrayal of the dictator. In the case of *Fiebre*, although aesthetic preoccupations are of priority to the narrator, his unrelenting opposition to Gómez and the nature of the genre constrict his artistic representation of the dictator. On the other hand, the narrator of *En la casa del pez que escupe el agua* exploits the restrictions of his genre, a historical novel, to enrich the artistic depiction of Gómez. He, who seeks to demystify the dictator and therefore make him known, offers an aesthetically rich and more balanced view of this historical Venezuelan figure.

Keywords: Portrayal, representation, dictator, narrator, ideology and genre.