

The critical assesement of literature from the perspsective of technology: Dante´s Infierno

La valoración crítica de la literatura desde la tecnología: El infierno de Dante

Dayanis Yine Olivares Ávila^{1*}

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9772-2248>

Anne Judleine Bandera Turro¹

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7057-0987>

Eufemia Figueroa Corrales¹

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8306-7854>

Yulianne Rodríguez Zorrilla¹

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5058-4345>

¹ University of Oriente, Cuba

* Corresponding author: olivaresyine@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Critical appraisal in today's preuniversity education is essential for the education of the next generation. It contributes to the development of critical, creative, axiological, linguistic, aesthetic, artistic, and literary thinking, contextualized to all times and to the norms of coexistence and social behavior, and embodied in appropriate modes of action. All of this, related to technology, offers us opportunities to foster the development of value-based and aesthetic-literary education. Currently, there are limitations in the appraisal of literary works that are a concern for researchers and teachers. This important aspect reveals the need to contextualize new ideas for their teaching. Therefore, the objective of this scientific article is to systematize the critical appraisal of literature from a technological perspective. Scientific methods such as historical-logical analysis and synthesis, observation, and documentary review were used for the development of this research.

Keywords: literature, critical appraisal, technology

RESUMEN

La valoración crítica en la educación preuniversitaria actual es esencial para la formación de la nueva generación contribuye al desarrollo del pensamiento crítico, creativo, axiológico, lingüístico, estético, artístico y literario, contextualizado a todos los tiempos y a las normas de convivencia el comportamiento social, concreta-do en adecuados modos de actuación. Todo esto relacionado con la tecnología, nos ofrece oportunidades para favorecer el desarrollo de la educación valorativa y estético-literaria. En la actualidad existen manifestaciones de limitaciones hacia la valoración de obras literarias que constituye preocupación para los investigadores y docentes, aspecto importante que revela la necesidad de contextualizar nuevas ideas para su enseñanza. Por lo que se determina como objetivo en este artículo científico la sistematización de valoración crítica de la literatura desde la tecnología. Para el desarrollo de la investigación se emplearon métodos científicos como: histórico-lógico, análisis-síntesis, observación y revisión documental.

Palabras clave: literatura, valoración crítica, tecnología

1. Introduction

Literature is a fundamental tool for the comprehensive education of students. It not only provides knowledge but also develops essential skills and competencies for life in society. Literature enables students to connect with reality in a creative, reflective, and critical way, awakening their imagination and their capacity for critical thinking and appraisal.

In an increasingly complex and globalized world, literature continues to be a key instrument for the formation of critical, reflective, and competent citizens, capable of understanding and transforming the world around them. In today's schools, literature seeks much more than the simple memorization of texts. The aim is to foster active, critical, and meaningful learning that transcends mere reading and extends to the holistic formation of the student.

Many authors have addressed the teaching of literature from different perspectives. Hernández (2011), Garrigas (2013), Aranda (2018), Martínez (2019), Figueroa (2019), Rodríguez (2022), Bandera (2022), Rodríguez (2023), and Torres (2025) all coincide, to some extent, in affirming that literature refines sensitivity and fosters self-reflection and evaluative capacity, as it enhances axiological, critical-contextual, and aesthetic values.

Literature is conceived as a form of social consciousness, an aesthetic expression of material and spiritual life, and a cultural tool of peoples, while also creating imaginaries. It reflects the dynamic relationship between discourse, cognition, and society, and highlights the contextualized nature of language and literary studies.

Torres (2025) warns that the literary work is now conceived as a process in constant transformation, a dynamic flow that evolves with each new reading, interpretation, and historical context. It is no longer perceived as a fixed and immutable object but as a living fabric, always open to reinterpretations and new perspectives. This vision recognizes that the meaning of a literary text does not reside solely in its original form but is continuously constructed and reconstructed through the dialogue between reader, time, and culture.

In this sense, critical literary appraisal seeks to guide readers, emphasizing the objectivity of a balanced review that, accompanied by critical thinking, teaches them to appropriate basic concepts and principles of a given topic or area of knowledge, and later to master that subject in a critical, reflective, contextualized, and experiential way—where subject and environment become one.

Literature and critical appraisal must never be separated, since literature, by its human content and aesthetic

qualities, is a highly effective instrument for awakening motivation and interest in reading from an early age. By its axiological and encyclopedic character, literature converges with multiple sciences, allowing criticism—as the art of forming judgments about a literary work, as a pathway to knowledge and aesthetic pleasure—to complement the reading of the literary text. Criticism reinforces concepts, confirms, and even modifies the vision extracted by the student from their dialogue with literature, while preserving the student's right to express opinions about what they have read.

Similarly, Rodríguez (2021) emphasizes the need to foster the reading of literary texts so that, based on the values acquired in sociocultural contexts, students construct their individual readings—that is, interpret, evaluate the aesthetic-literary sign, and participate with imagination and creativity in their own culture. The goal is to form professionals who read with a critical spirit and interpret the deepest meaning of the literary text.

The current processes of continuous improvement in education require advancing toward higher levels in the conception of teaching and learning, ensuring the comprehensive formation of the human being in accordance with the new conditions and demands of contemporary life, committed to nationality and culture, as expressed in the general aims and objectives.

At present, the Third Improvement of the National System is being carried out. The research conducted on this process constitutes an uninterrupted and permanent effort that continuously poses new and more complex scientific-pedagogical tasks. In its different stages, it has remained consistent with social demands and the challenges arising from educational practice. In contemporary times, however, there is still little interest in literature among young people, and efforts are being made to address the correct critical appraisal of literary works through study and technological updating.

This situation has become a constant concern for researchers and educators: the insufficient interest in reading and critically appraising representative works of World Literature, as well as the limited use of technological resources to promote interest in literature among students.

The above reveals shortcomings in the use of literary works that facilitate students' critical appraisal. Therefore, the scientific problem of this article is declared as follows: **How can literature be used to enhance critical appraisal?** To address this, the research objective is defined as the development of the application "*Love Literature*", which contributes to students' critical appraisal and constitutes an alternative for the formation of the new



generation. Various methods and materials were employed during its development, as outlined below.

2. Materials and Methods

The analysis focused on the theoretical elements that characterize the potential of the 10th-grade program for fostering critical appraisal. Theoretical-level methods such as analysis and synthesis, induction–deduction, and hermeneutics were employed. These methods enabled the foundation of the research and allowed for deeper exploration of its scientific logic.

At the empirical level, methods such as observation, surveys, and documentary review were applied. These revealed the nature and complexity of this educational phenomenon, as well as the limitations present in the development of literature and its analysis. Currently, the teaching–learning process lacks actions that effectively promote the development of critical appraisal.

For the intentionally selected sample, a favorable environment was created to carry out the research and ensure that all proposed objectives were met, with the active participation of students. This study was conducted at the *Cuqui Boch Soto* preuniversity school, located in Santiago de Cuba Province. The intentional sample consisted of 38 students and 4 teachers from the 10th grade, and interviews were applied.

3. Results

In contemporary schools, literature is conceived as more than the simple memorization of texts. The aim is to foster active, critical, and meaningful learning that transcends mere reading and contributes to the student's holistic formation.

Literature, understood as a form of social consciousness, is both an aesthetic expression of material and spiritual life and a cultural tool of peoples, while also creating imaginaries. The study of language and literature as sociocultural practices highlights their interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary character, while maintaining autonomy as fields of study.

According to Montaña (2008), literature is not mere cold information; it is, above all, plural wisdom that cannot exist apart from the intimate encounter between reader and text. Aranda (2018) points out that literary analysis, from the perspective of the current approach, aligns with developmental learning, as it promotes the integral development of the student's personality, supports the progressive transition from dependence to independence and self-regulation, and fosters the capacity for lifelong learning.

Rodríguez (2022) considers literary education as a pedagogical process that considers the social and cultural characteristics of universities, community institutions, and students, with the aim of encouraging sociocultural engagement with the literary text—feeling, interpreting, and valuing its meanings—and, through shared reading, creatively reconstructing them. This process integrates cognitive and affective-emotional dimensions, enabling students to move from being objects of formation to subjects of their own transformation.

In this sense, Rodríguez & Núñez (2023) argue that the school's role is no longer simply to teach literature, but rather to teach students how to read, interpret, and produce meaning, guided by teachers who promote aesthetic enjoyment and provide tools to understand literary works as cultural, historical, and social products. Bandera (2022) adds that the literary text is recognized not only for its artistic values but also for its significance in the history of literature and culture.

Up to this point, these authors coincide in valuing the study of literature from different perspectives. However, the scientific literature consulted reveals insufficient studies on the critical appraisal of literature in relation to modern technological advances and their benefits.

Critical appraisal of literary works in preuniversity education through technology

Among the objectives of the *Spanish-Literature* subject in preuniversity education is the enjoyment of reading literary works and their analysis as ideological, aesthetic, and artistic phenomena, as well as the appraisal of the multiple relationships between human beings and society reflected in the attitudes and feelings assumed by the characters under study.

From an academic perspective, critical appraisal develops reading comprehension, text analysis, summarizing skills, the ability to identify arguments, and the capacity to express ideas clearly and precisely. From a personal perspective, by analyzing texts, interpreting symbolism, identifying themes, and discussing different viewpoints, students strengthen critical thinking and analytical skills, while also stimulating imagination, creativity, and originality.

In this way, critical commentary reconstructs the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of the literary work. Literature classes should therefore be conceived as processes of analysis, contextualization, and appraisal, where students actively produce meaning and enrich the knowledge and values acquired from their reality.

The aesthetic-axiological contextualization of a literary work involves analyzing how the ethical, moral, and aesthetic values of an era influence its creation and



reception. This approach allows us to understand not only the content of the work but also its deeper meaning in relation to the context in which it was produced.

Although new approaches to literary study often present themselves as innovative, they frequently amount to accumulations of existing knowledge. Critical appraisal establishes the parameters for analyzing a literary work as historical human knowledge derived from thought and articulated through words.

The *Spanish-Literature* subject in preuniversity education prioritizes the study of literary works, emphasizing their distinctive characteristics and fostering sensitivity and emotional growth that bring readers closer to criticism and literary creation. From this perspective, the benefits of reading literary works are combined with the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)—including educational software, encyclopedias, apps, websites, and audiovisual resources—to enhance comprehension and the construction of meaning.

Technology and literature in preuniversity education

New technologies provide invaluable contributions to pre-university education, transforming the learning experience and opening new possibilities. Educational applications and interactive videos allow students to learn at their own pace and focus on areas where they need greater support.

The use of educational games, videos, animations, and other multimedia resources makes learning more engaging, dynamic, and exciting. These tools help students acquire essential skills for the digital era, such as information retrieval and data analysis. They also foster creativity, autonomy, and active participation in the learning process.

Figuerola (2019) emphasizes that teaching and learning reading comprehension across diverse sign systems and media—digital, digitized, cinematic, musical, written, hypertext, among others—requires precise didactic guidance. The essential objective of virtualization, therefore, is to transform subjects through the use of technological resources, in line with current conceptions of Cuban education, thereby strengthening the teacher's role in the teaching-learning process.

A mobile application, or APK, is a software program designed to run on smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices. It serves as a tool to perform specific operations or functions, generally designed to simplify complex tasks and enhance the user's experience while expanding the functionalities of the device. An Android APK is a package file that contains everything necessary to install an application, including the code, resources (images, sounds,

etc.), the manifest (defining permissions and features), and other essential files.

Use of APKs

APKs are programmed to function offline, allowing them to reach users outside of Google Play Store or on devices where the store is not available. They can be shared with friends, family, or colleagues, enabling installation on multiple devices. APKs play a crucial role in the Android ecosystem, serving as the “package” that contains everything necessary for an application to run on a device.

Proposal: APK “Love Literature” The APK “Love Literature” (Fig. 1) was developed using the MIT App Inventor platform, which does not require a specific programming language but allows developers to work more easily and quickly. Its purpose is to support teachers and students, improve the quality of the teaching-learning process, and foster interest and appreciation for literature. The application will include biographical material, information about the work, representative images, curiosities, audiobooks, and other resources.

The proposed set of activities presented in this research is designed to motivate students by fostering critical appraisal of Dante's *Inferno* through technology. It offers activities and curiosities tailored to students' ages, interests, and aspirations.

Although *Inferno*, derived from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is one of the masterpieces of medieval Italian literature, it is rarely addressed in class. For this reason, it is proposed as extracurricular reading, with the APK serving as a tool to enhance its appreciation and critical appraisal by highlighting its aesthetic, axiological, and contextual contributions.

Examples of proposed activities

• Historical and Cultural Context

Objective: Place the work within its historical context and understand the influences on Dante. **Activity:** Research the historical and cultural background of 14th century Italy, as well as relevant aspects of Dante's life and the influences of his time on his work. Present findings in a report or presentation.

• Reading and Summarizing

Objective: Become familiar with the structure and content of the work. **Activity:** Divide the work into cantos and assign students the task of reading and summarizing each canto. Summaries may be presented in different formats in class.

• Character Analysis



Objective: Relate sins, characters, and punishments in the work. **Activity:** Dante encounters various characters in *Inferno* who suffer penalties and punishments. a) Select several characters from different circles and summarize their story, sin, and punishment. b) Analyze the symbolism of each of these characters. c) Examine specific passages to identify literary devices related to the characters.

- Comparison with Other Works

Objective: Analyze similarities and differences in the representation of hell and punishment. **Activity:** Compare *Inferno* with other literary works addressing the afterlife, such as *The Divine Comedy* in its entirety, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or even contemporary works.

Debate on the Work

Objective: Foster critical thinking about the moral implications of the work.

Activity: Organize a debate on the ideas of justice and morality presented in *Inferno*. Use the following guiding questions:

- What does *Inferno* teach us?
- What is the central message of the work?
- What role does Virgil play in *Inferno*? How is he characterized, and on whom is this character based?
- What do the three animals that appear to Dante at the beginning of the work symbolize?
- In what ways is the Church criticized in the work?
- Is Dante's punishment of sinners fair? Why? Provide examples from specific passages of the text.

Artistic Creation

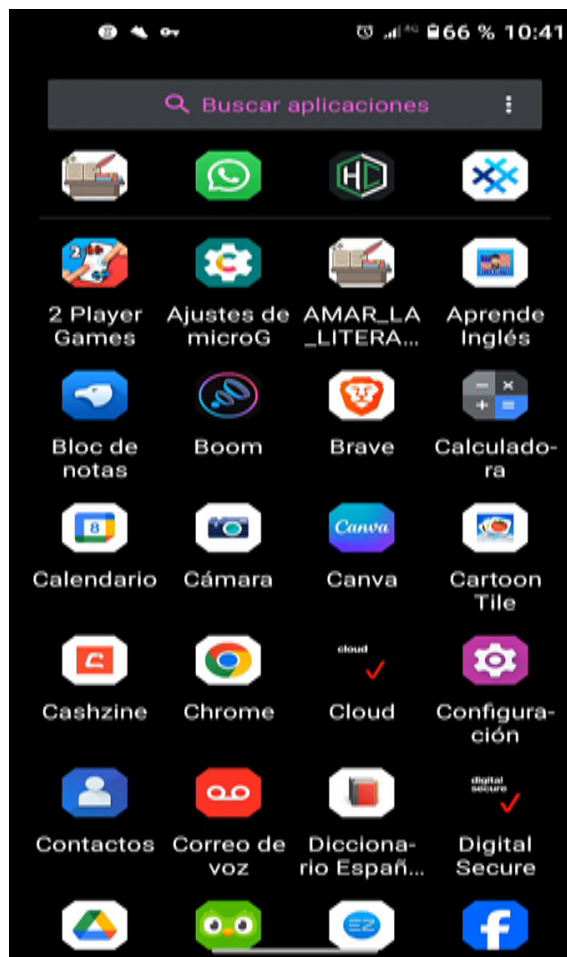
Objective: Express creative understanding of the work.

Activity: Invite students to create an artistic representation (drawing, painting, collage, or musical mix) of a scene or character from *Inferno*. They may use the images provided in the "Curiosities" section as inspiration for their creations.

Personal Reflection

Objective: Relate the work to personal social, cultural, and/or spiritual experiences.

Activity: Write an essay reflecting on what *Inferno* means to you in personal, social, cultural, and/or spiritual terms. Support your reflection with analysis, comprehension, and articles on literary criticism provided in the bibliographic references section.



Picture 1. APK "Love Literature" (sp. Amar la literatura)

Evaluation of Results

For the appraisal of the proposal's outcomes, the following indicators were considered:

- Level of motivation for reading Dante's *Inferno*.
- Quality and applicability of the application.

Overall, based on the tabulation of responses obtained during the research, it was confirmed that the APK has proven to be a valuable tool for awakening students' interest in Dante's *Inferno*. It aligns with the objectives of the subject program, offering a more interactive and accessible way to approach a work that may initially seem complex. The use of images, videos, and activities captured students' attention and stimulated curiosity about the text.

The application demonstrates excellent potential to adapt to the diversity of learning styles among students. Its variety of resources—texts, audio, images, and interactive activities—allows each student to engage with the format that best suits their preferences and pace. Furthermore,

the possibility of accessing content anytime and anywhere facilitates autonomous and personalized learning. While there is always room for improvement, the application already provides a solid foundation to meet individual student needs.

Students agree that technological resources should continue to be incorporated into literature classes, as they represent innovative teaching tools. They also contribute to greater access to information and interactive experiences, while facilitating participation in the learning process and in the critical appraisal of literature.

4. Discussion

The results of this research confirm the feasibility and value of integrating technology—specifically through a mobile application (APK)—as a tool to enhance the critical appraisal of literature at the preuniversity level, using Dante's *Inferno* as a case study. This discussion interprets the findings in light of the theoretical framework, analyzing the implications of this integration and confronting the results with the initial problem and the scientific literature consulted.

The central issue identified—insufficient interest in reading and critically appraising canonical literary works, combined with limited use of technological resources—finds a concrete and contextualized response in the APK “*Love Literature*.” The high motivation observed among students validates the premise of authors such as Figueroa (2019) and Torres (2025), who advocate for a teaching of literature that engages with digital platforms and recognizes the text as a dynamic flow. The application not only brings a complex medieval work closer to a generation of digital natives but also respects the nature of the literary experience: not as mere data transmission, but as an “intimate encounter” with the text, in Montañó's (2008) words. The inclusion of audiobooks, images, and curiosities serves as an effective bridge, reducing the barriers posed by the historical and linguistic distance of the *Divine Comedy* and facilitating the initial dialogue between student and text.

The APK transcends its role as a simple repository of information, becoming a scaffold that guides the development of critical thinking. The proposed activities—from contextual analysis to personal reflection and debate—operationalize the principles of Rodríguez (2022) and Aranda (2018) on developmental learning. The application structures a pedagogical process that promotes the transition from dependence to independence. Students are not given a single interpretation; instead, they are provided with tools (context, excerpts, guiding questions) to construct

their own appraisal. This is crucial, since critical appraisal is the necessary complement to reading and a student's right to express opinions about what they read. In this sense, the APK democratizes access to analytical instruments, empowering students as active subjects of their literary formation, as Rodríguez & Núñez (2023) propose.

A significant finding is the tool's ability to address diverse learning styles, often overlooked in traditional literature teaching. The multimodality of the APK—integrating text, audio, images, and artistic creation—responds to the heterogeneity of contemporary classrooms. Visual learners can rely on images of the circles of hell, auditory learners benefit from the audiobook, and kinesthetic or creative learners find space in artistic activities. This flexibility is an inherent advantage of well-applied technology and aligns with the need for more personalized and inclusive education, allowing each student to establish a meaningful connection with the work.

When compared with the scientific literature, the results corroborate the insufficiency noted in the initial analysis: few studies directly address the synergy between literary critical appraisal and technology. This research contributes to filling that gap. The proposal goes beyond simple digitalization of content; it represents a didactic reconceptualization. As Figueroa (2019) anticipated, the goal is not merely to virtualize but to transform the subject. The APK does not replace the teacher; rather, it redefines the teacher's role. The teacher becomes a facilitator, guiding knowledge and mediating the critical interactions promoted by the application, freeing class time for deeper debates and collaborative activities that emerge from prior work with the tool.

Nevertheless, challenges and limitations must be acknowledged. The success of such a proposal depends on external factors, such as stable access to mobile devices and electricity across educational contexts, which may not be uniform. There is also the latent risk that fascination with the technological medium could overshadow the literary object of study. The teacher's role is fundamental in ensuring that technology serves as a vehicle rather than an end in itself, always orienting activities toward the construction of meaning and the aesthetic and axiological appraisal of the work, as required by the subject program. The APK is an excellent means to achieve the objectives of enjoyment and ideological-aesthetic analysis, but it requires conscious and critical implementation by educators.

The discussion demonstrates that the integration of technology through the APK “*Love Literature*” is not a superficial modernization, but rather a robust pedagogical strategy that responds to the demands of contemporary

education. This tool facilitates the aesthetic-axiological contextualization of the work, fosters active and critical learning, and leverages digital resources to revitalize the study of literature.

The positive results in terms of student motivation and participation suggest that this model can be extrapolated to the analysis of other literary works. In doing so, it contributes to systematizing critical appraisal through technology and, ultimately, to forming more reflective, critical, and culturally literate citizens—an essential goal of preuniversity literary education.

5. Conclusions

The present research favored the systematization and development of the potential offered by Dante's *Inferno* for fostering critical appraisal through technology, thereby contributing to the formation of new generations. It succeeded in consciously promoting values and attitudes aligned with students' social and cultural contexts.

It is considered that educational work with young people should emphasize the reading and critical appraisal of works such as Dante's *Inferno*, so that they may understand the inevitable consequences of human vices such as fraud and betrayal. This must be approached from a scientific and academic perspective, through the use of new technologies deeply rooted in a generation of digital natives. These students are witnesses to a profound communicative revolution—the expansion of electronic communication—which, in contemporary times, advances at a rapid and irreversible pace, migrating toward electronic formats.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the positioning of the article or the content presented.

Author Contributions

- **Dayanis Yine Olivares Ávila:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Drafting of the original manuscript, Visualization.
- **Anne Judleine Bandera Turro:** Data curation, Formal analysis, Validation, Writing – Review and editing.
- **Eufemia Figueroa Corrales:** Investigation, Resources, Supervision, Writing – Review and editing.
- **Yulianne Rodríguez Zorrilla:** Software, Formal analysis, Visualization, Writing – Review and editing.