

Creative Engagement with Hispanic Literature through Generative AI

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This technological leap, as Küchemann et al. emphasize,” has reshaped our previous perceptions, bringing to the table a fresh set of opportunities and challenges for education” [3].

- As Stefania Giannini states in the forward to UNESCO’s 2023 guidance report, “GenAI tools are increasingly able to automate some basic levels of writing and artwork creation, they are forcing education policy-makers and institutions to revisit why, what and how we learn. These are now critical considerations for education in this new phase of the digital era” [4].
- Rather than replacing human insight, the AI stimulates students to evaluate style, tone, and cultural context from multiple perspectives. This aligns with the core argument of multimodal digital storytelling, an approach that Hui-Chun Chu et al. summarize from recent literature as not only a tool for personal expression, “but [one that] is also widely applied in educational settings, offering learners a rich and engaging experience that cultivates various abilities and behaviors, such as motivation, engagement, digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking.” [5]



Overview and Objectives

- Challenge: Explore intersections between generative AI and Latin American literary studies making literary analysis more interactive and immersive
- Goal: Use AI tools to enhance engagement with biographical context and textual analysis
- Focus: Deep engagement with Plácido's *La flor de la caña* and Rubén Darío's biography and poetic style using creative AI.
- Additional consideration: Identifying and discussing AI biases in historical role-playing and poetic creation.

Introducing Plácido (Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés)

- Born in 1809, Havana, Cuba; executed in 1844.
- Renowned Afro-Cuban poet known for romantic and politically charged poetry.
- Themes: Colonialism, identity, racial inequality, and freedom.
- Executed in La Escalera Conspiracy, reflecting political tensions in colonial Cuba.





Analyzing 'La flor de la caña' Fragment

Yo vi una veguera /
trigueña tostada, /
que el sol envidioso /
de sus lindas gracias /
o quizá bajando /
de su esfera sacra /
prendado de ella, /
le quemó la cara. /
Y es tierna y modesta, /
como cuando saca /
sus primeros tilos /
la flor de la caña."

"I saw a tobacco worker,
wheat-skinned and sun-kissed;
so lovely that the jealous sun,
descending perhaps from its sacred sphere,
enamored of her grace,
burned her face with fire.
She is tender and modest,
like the sugarcane flower
when it softly unfurls
its first blossoms."

Excerpt 3: Final Plea & Political Undertones

Ten piedad del triste
Que tanto te ama;
Mira que no puedo
Vivir de esperanzas,
Sufriendo vaivenes
Como flor de caña.

“Precious veguera
With sun-kissed skin,
Have pity on the sorrowful one
Who so deeply loves you;
See that I cannot
Live on hope alone,
Suffering the sways
Like the sugarcane flower.”

Analysis: Personal vulnerability and political commentary symbolized by sugarcane's fragility.

AI-generated Visual Interpretations



*A white sugarcane flower in a green field.
There is sunlight, and the sky is blue.
Next to the flower, there is a piece of paper and a pen.
The image represents the beauty of nature and poetry.*

*Prompt. ChatGPT, GPT-4o, OpenAI, 11 Oct. 2024,
chat.openai.com/chat.*



*A young wheat-skinned woman with curly hair down to her
shoulders stands in the countryside. She wears a light-colored
dress with bare shoulders, smiles softly, and holds red flowers
in her hands. Behind her are trees, a blue sky, and a few
clouds. The image conveys peace, beauty, and nature.*

*Prompt. ChatGPT, GPT-4o, OpenAI, 11 Oct. 2024,
chat.openai.com/chat.*

Outcomes from my class



Using the visuals, we launched into a discussion about the themes and messages.



Students' visuals based on poem's imagery (sugarcane flower, described woman).



Students found it more difficult to create an image on the political undertones, so we discussed strategies for doing so.

AI-assisted Poetry Creation Activity

- Next, students wrote poems using ChatGPT in Plácido's style.
- Analysis: Similar styles but varied in political and personal themes.



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- Like a wandering shadow beneath the burning sun,
I walk in chains, in sweat and silent cries,
Yet in my chest, a bold spirit never dies,
Its yearning pulses, fierce and never done.
The wind lifts up my pleas into the skies,
And air itself trembles, sorrow-spun;
My mourning echoes on, a constant run,
From hearts where grief and hope together rise.
O liberty, bright star that calls to me,
To you I send my verse with tenderness—
To rise with you in flight is all I seek.
Though dense the night that veils my flame may be,
There shines the beauty—bold, in its distress—
Of one who lives and dies for skies so bleak.

Main Theme:

The longing for freedom in the midst of suffering and oppression.

Subthemes:

Inner strength and resilience in the face of adversity

Persistent sorrow as a form of expression

Hope projected onto an unattainable ideal (freedom)

Beauty found in struggle—even when tragic

A higher calling or transcendent purpose (“lives and dies for the skies”)

Student's Perspective of the Original Poem

- When I read Plácido's "*Yo vi una veguera*," I thought it was emotional and full of beautiful details. He talks about a woman he clearly loves a lot, and he uses nature and everyday objects to describe her—like the flower of the sugar cane (*la flor de la caña*), her clothes, and even a letter she gives him. I liked how personal it felt, but also kind of idealized, like he puts this woman on a pedestal. The way he repeats "*la flor de la caña*" at the end of each stanza gives the poem a soft, musical feeling, almost like a song. Even though the poem is romantic, I know Plácido was also writing at a time when he was dealing with racism and oppression, so I think there's more going on underneath the surface.



Poem I About Liberty and Suffering

- This poem feels more serious and political. It's about someone who wants freedom and is suffering because they don't have it. We can see the influence of Plácido's life here, especially since he was imprisoned and later executed. Lines like "*O liberty, bright star that calls to me*" made us think of his other poems about justice. But honestly, this poem sounds more like a classic sonnet than Plácido's original style. It doesn't have that Cuban flavor or the little everyday images like in "*Yo vi una veguera*." I didn't feel the same emotional connection.
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Benefits of Creating Poems with AI

- **Enhanced Literary Analysis:** Clarifies literary styles and poetic forms through imitation and comparison.
- **Deepened Historical Understanding:** Encourages students to engage deeply with historical contexts, symbolism, and metaphors.
- **Improved Critical Thinking:** Fosters analytical skills by comparing original texts with AI-generated imitations.
- **Creative Engagement:** Sparks creativity, encouraging students to interpret and express themes personally.
- **Accessible Entry Point:** Makes older, complex texts more approachable by bridging language and style gaps.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Promotes collaboration through group analysis and discussions of generated poems.



From Poems to Songs with Suno

- In many of my classes, we convert poems into songs on their topics.
- We chose the traditional afrocuban “Guajira lenta” musical style to accompany the poem/song created by the students



Benefits of Creating Songs with AI

- **Increased Emotional Connection:** Music reinforces emotional resonance, helping students internalize literary themes.
- **Enhanced Memory and Retention:** Song melodies improve memorability of literary elements, themes, and contexts.
- **Greater Student Engagement:** Actively engages students through an enjoyable, interactive experience.
- **Contextual Cultural Understanding:** Encourages exploration of historical and cultural significance through musical styles reflective of literary periods.
- **Interdisciplinary Connections:** Integrates literary studies with music, history, and technology, enriching education.
- **Creativity and Self-expression:** Allows students to express interpretations artistically, developing creative thinking and personal connections.



Ruben Darío

- **Father of Literary Modernism in Spanish**
- **Born in Nicaragua**, he traveled throughout Latin America and Europe as a poet, journalist, and diplomat.

Key works: *Azul...* (1888), *Prosas profanas* (1896), *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905).

Style: Innovative and musical, influenced by French symbolism and exotic themes.

Legacy: Revolutionized Spanish-language poetry and inspired writers like Pablo Neruda and Octavio Paz.





Assignment Overview

- **Activity:** AI-assisted biographical Q&A with Rubén Darío
- **Method:** Students asked ChatGPT biographical questions, expecting responses in Darío's voice
- **Objective:** Deepen understanding of Darío's literary context, themes, and influences
- **Additional Task:** Students analyzed AI's responses for historical accuracy and bias

AI Prompts Used

Student Prompts:

- 'How did U.S. intervention shape Latin America's history?'
- 'What modernist elements define your poetry?'
- 'Why did your grandfather rename you Rubén Darío?'

Instructor's Instruction to ChatGPT:

- 'Answer as if you are Rubén Darío. Maintain historical accuracy and use period-appropriate language.'

****Unexpected Observation:**** AI responses varied in tone and gendered language use



Responses to Female Students

- **To Gloria:**

Querida Gloria, en mi época ya se percibían las influencias extranjeras en nuestra tierra, con sus luces y sombras. Es posible que sin la intervención de los Estados Unidos, Latinoamérica hubiera seguido un camino diferente, tal vez más autónomo y acorde con sus propias raíces y anhelos. Pero la historia es un tejido complejo, y cada hilo, por foráneo que sea, forma parte de nuestra identidad.

Dear Gloria, in my time, foreign influences were already being felt in our land, with both their lights and shadows. It is possible that without U.S. intervention, Latin America would have followed a different path, perhaps more autonomous and aligned with its own roots and aspirations. But history is a complex fabric, and every thread, no matter how foreign, becomes part of our identity.

- **To Anniina:**

Mi querida Anniina, en el modernismo, busqué renovar la poesía, alejándome de los moldes tradicionales y explorando nuevos ritmos, formas y temas. En mis obras, como 'Azul...' y 'Prosas profanas,' combiné la musicalidad del verso con imágenes exóticas y simbólicas, buscando siempre la belleza y la expresión de lo íntimo.

My dear Anniina, in modernismo, I sought to renew poetry, moving away from traditional molds and exploring new rhythms, forms, and themes. In my works, such as 'Azul...' and 'Prosas profanas,' I combined the musicality of verse with exotic and symbolic imagery, always seeking beauty and the expression of the intimate.

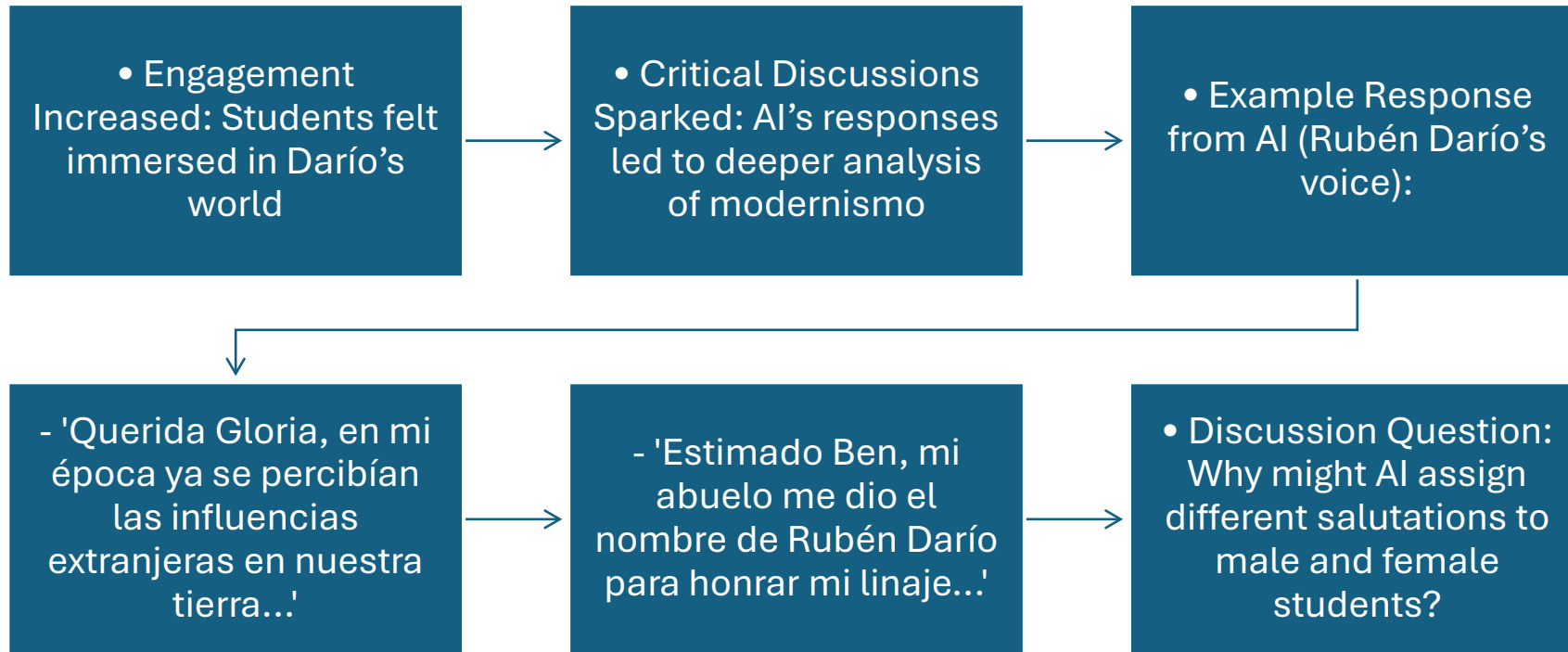
Response to Male Student

- **To Ben:**

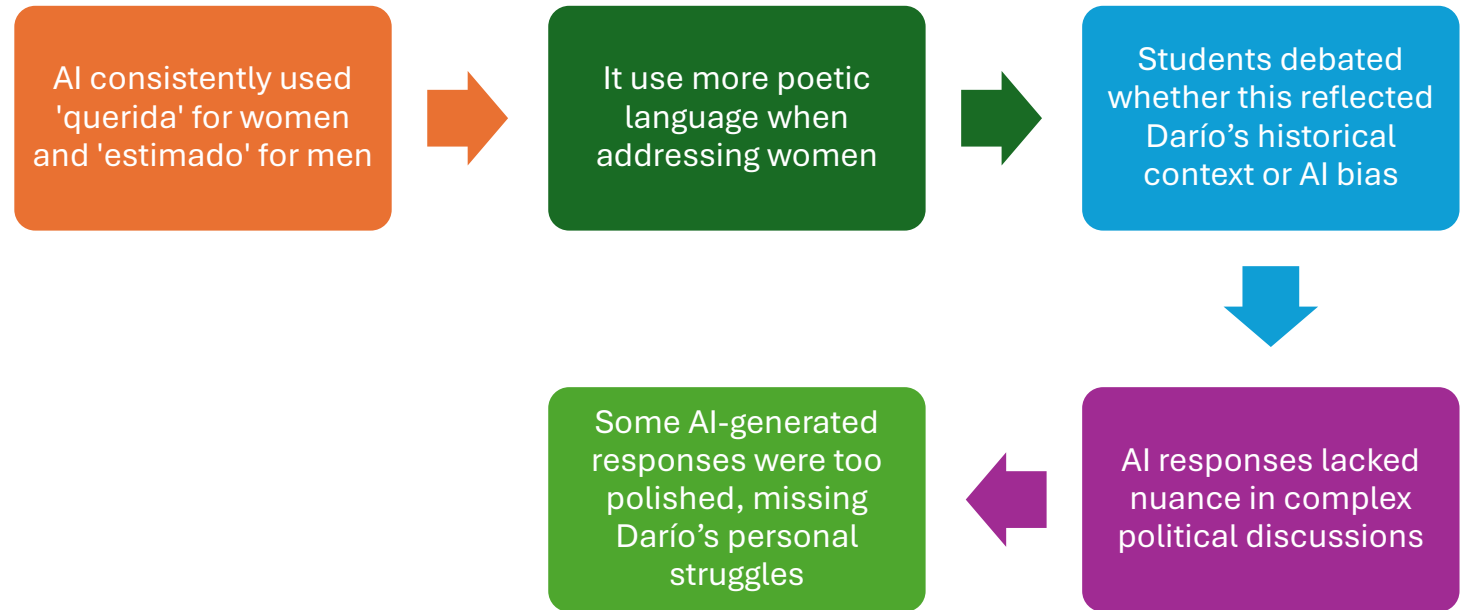
Estimado Ben, mi abuelo me dio el nombre de Rubén Darío como una forma de honrar a la familia, ya que 'Darío' era un apellido con historia en mi linaje. Mi abuelo, un hombre de fuerte carácter e influencia en mi vida, decidió cambiar mi nombre original, Félix Rubén García Sarmiento, por el de Rubén Darío, marcando así el inicio de mi camino como poeta.

Dear Ben, my grandfather gave me the name of Rubén Darío as a way to honor the family, as 'Darío' was a surname with history in my lineage. My grandfather, a man of strong character and influence in my life, decided to change my original name, Félix Rubén García Sarmiento, to Rubén Darío, thus marking the beginning of my path as a poet.

Outcome - Student Engagement



Identifying AI Biases - Key Challenges



Pedagogical Implications and Ethics



Cultural sensitivity and ethics crucial in AI use.



Balancing traditional and innovative approaches.



AI enhances accessibility and engagement in literature.



Students gain knowledge of the authors and works we analyze while also learning how to use AI tools.



In Conclusion

- As O. Zawacki-Richter et al. note "It is crucial to emphasise that educational technology is not (only) about technology – it is the pedagogical, ethical, social, cultural and economic dimensions of AIEd we should be concerned about." [12].
- As Godwin-Jones notes, the value of these tools is not automatic; authenticity in AI-assisted learning “depends on critical framing rather than automation” [9].
- As Küchemann et al. describe, AI serves as a bridge between creative production and reflective analysis [3], affirming that it can deepen, not dilute, the interpretive goals of humanistic education.



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