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Revisiting Ahmad Amin's Literary Criticism in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Bridging Evaluative Tradition and Interpretive Approaches

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Abstract

This study revisits Ahmad Amin's concept of literary criticism through his seminal work *Al-Naqd al-Adabi* and examines its relevance in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Employing library research with an intellectual history approach and qualitative content analysis, the study reconstructs Ahmad Amin's critical framework and situates it within the development of modern Arabic literary criticism. The findings reveal that Ahmad Amin conceptualizes literary criticism as an intellectual activity that integrates interpretation and evaluation rather than privileging one over the other. He argues that critical judgment should emerge from a thorough understanding of literary texts and be guided by objectivity, aesthetic sensitivity (*dhawq*), broad knowledge, and intellectual integrity. The study further demonstrates that Ahmad Amin occupies a transitional position between the evaluative tradition of classical Arabic criticism and the interpretive approaches of modern literary criticism. In contemporary contexts, his ideas offer a valuable framework for understanding the role of human judgment in AI-assisted literary criticism. While artificial intelligence can support textual interpretation and analysis, aesthetic evaluation and intellectual responsibility remain fundamentally human domains. These findings highlight the continuing relevance of Ahmad Amin's literary-critical thought for contemporary literary studies.

Keywords: *Ahmad Amin; Arabic literary criticism; interpretation; evaluation; artificial intelligence*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kembali konsep kritik sastra Ahmad Amin melalui karya monumentalnya *Al-Naqd al-Adabi* serta menelaah relevansinya pada era Artificial Intelligence. Penelitian menggunakan metode kepustakaan dengan pendekatan sejarah intelektual dan analisis isi kualitatif untuk merekonstruksi kerangka kritik sastra Ahmad Amin serta menempatkannya dalam perkembangan kritik sastra Arab modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ahmad Amin memandang kritik sastra sebagai aktivitas intelektual yang mengintegrasikan fungsi interpretasi dan evaluasi secara seimbang. Menurutnya, penilaian kritis harus didasarkan pada pemahaman yang mendalam terhadap karya sastra serta didukung oleh objektivitas, kepekaan estetik (*dhawq*), keluasan wawasan, dan integritas intelektual. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa Ahmad Amin menempati posisi transisional yang menjembatani tradisi kritik evaluatif klasik dengan pendekatan interpretatif dalam kritik sastra modern. Dalam konteks kontemporer, pemikirannya menawarkan kerangka konseptual yang relevan untuk memahami posisi manusia dalam *AI-assisted literary criticism*. Meskipun kecerdasan buatan mampu membantu interpretasi dan analisis teks, penilaian estetik serta tanggung jawab intelektual tetap menjadi ranah manusia. Temuan ini menegaskan relevansi berkelanjutan pemikiran Ahmad Amin bagi studi kritik sastra kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *Ahmad Amin; kritik sastra Arab; interpretasi; evaluasi; kecerdasan buatan*

Introduction

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly Large Language Models (LLMs), has significantly transformed a wide range of academic disciplines, including literary and humanities studies. AI-powered systems are now capable of analyzing literary texts, generating summaries, identifying themes, and even producing automated interpretations.¹ These capabilities create new opportunities for literary scholarship while simultaneously raising fundamental questions concerning the nature of literary criticism, the objectivity of interpretation, and the role of human critics in an increasingly AI-assisted intellectual environment. Although AI offers unprecedented analytical efficiency and computational capacity, its ability to comprehend aesthetic values, human experience, and the

¹ Mustaghfirin, Masrun, and Rusdi. "AI-Augmented Game-Based Learning for Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills: Evidence from a Quasi-Experimental Study." *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 (January 2026): 76–92. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v7i1.22619>.

multidimensional meanings embedded in literary works remains a subject of ongoing debate.²

The relationship between interpretation and evaluation has long been a central issue in literary criticism. Since its emergence as an academic discipline, literary criticism has continuously negotiated whether its primary function is to interpret the meaning of literary texts or to evaluate their aesthetic quality.³ This debate has persisted across various critical traditions and has gained renewed significance with the growing use of AI in literary analysis. Consequently, questions surrounding interpretation, evaluation, and objectivity have become increasingly relevant in contemporary discussions of AI-assisted literary criticism.

Within the Arabic intellectual tradition, literary criticism (*al-naqd al-adabī*) has undergone a long and dynamic evolution. During the early Islamic period, criticism was largely shaped by Qur'anic ethical values that emphasized morality, eloquence, and social utility. Under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, critical attention shifted toward linguistic and aesthetic dimensions, including rhetoric (*balāghah*), meter (*wazan*), rhyme (*qāfiyah*), and semantic precision. The modern period witnessed a profound transformation as increasing interaction with European intellectual traditions introduced historical, psychological, sociological, and scientific approaches to literary studies. This transformation generated a productive tension between the inherited evaluative tradition of classical Arabic criticism and the emerging interpretive and analytical paradigms of modern criticism.

Against this intellectual background, Ahmad Amin emerged as one of the most influential figures in modern Arabic literary criticism. Unlike many of his contemporaries who either embraced Western critical methodologies or adhered rigidly to classical traditions, Ahmad Amin adopted a more integrative position. Through *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, he sought to reconcile the rich heritage of classical Arabic criticism with

² Adnan Halim Husni, Yeni Ratna Yuningsih, Siti Sa'adah, Merry Choirani, Khairul Azmi, and R Yudha Alamsyah. "قيمة الحنين في شعر محمود درويش وكياهي الحاج مصطفى." | بسري: دراسة في الأدب المقارن The Value of Longing in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and K.H. Mustofa Bisri: A Comparative Literature Study." *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 (January 2026): 247–75. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v7i1.23625>.

³ Alfaisal, Haifa S. "The Politics of Literary Value in Early Modernist Arabic Comparative Literary Criticism." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 50, nos. 3–4 (November 2019): 251–77. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1570064x-12341387>.

modern scholarly approaches without privileging one at the expense of the other. He argued that literary criticism should not be confined to aesthetic judgment alone but should also function as an interpretive practice that enables readers to understand the meanings, values, and cultural significance of literary texts. Accordingly, effective literary criticism requires the integration of interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, aesthetic sensitivity, and broad intellectual knowledge.

Ahmad Amin's position is particularly significant because it represents a transitional moment in the evolution of modern Arabic literary criticism. While acknowledging the importance of scientific reasoning, rational inquiry, and inductive methods introduced through modern criticism, he simultaneously preserved the evaluative function that had long characterized the classical Arabic critical tradition. His thought therefore bridges two major paradigms in literary criticism—the evaluative tradition inherited from classical Arabic criticism and the interpretive orientation developed within modern critical theory. This integrative perspective renders Ahmad Amin's ideas highly relevant to contemporary debates concerning interpretation, objectivity, and human judgment in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Recent scholarship has examined Ahmad Amin and the development of modern Arabic literary criticism from various perspectives. Husnaya et al. (2025) argue that Ahmad Amin attempted to preserve the aesthetic values of classical Arabic literature while embracing intellectual renewal through historical and cultural approaches to poetry criticism.⁴ Likewise, studies on post-*Nahḍah* Arabic literary criticism have demonstrated that modern Arabic criticism was characterized by the adoption of scientific and interdisciplinary methodologies.⁵ Nevertheless, these studies primarily focus on the historical evolution of Arabic literary criticism rather than reconstructing Ahmad Amin's critical thought as a coherent conceptual framework encompassing interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, and the ethics of criticism.

⁴ Husnaya, Ni'ma Royyin, Titin Ardiyanti, Saddam Reza Hamidi, and Nida Adzkiya. "MODERN ARABIC POETRY CRITICISM FORM AHMAD AMIN'S PERSPECTIVE." *Muaddib: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature* 1, no. 3 (September 2025): 221–34. <https://doi.org/10.51190/muaddib.v01i03.36>.

⁵ Qur'aniyul Farid, Muhammad Jillul, and Rangga Iskandar Julkarnain. "Modernization Of Post-Al-Nahdah Arabic Literary Criticism." *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 11, no. 2 (April 2025): 450. <https://doi.org/10.58258/jime.v11i2.8628>.

Meanwhile, the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence has introduced new possibilities for literary criticism through Large Language Models and computational text analysis. Dong et al. demonstrate that AI systems are capable of producing increasingly sophisticated literary interpretations when supported by appropriate theoretical frameworks⁶, whereas Bolaños et al. emphasize that AI can enhance scholarly analysis but cannot replace human critical judgment and intellectual responsibility.⁷ Despite these advances, existing scholarship on Ahmad Amin, modern Arabic literary criticism, and AI-assisted literary criticism remains largely disconnected. To date, no study has reconstructed Ahmad Amin's theory of literary criticism in *Al-Naqd al-Adabī* as a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship among interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, and the human role in AI-assisted literary criticism.

Against this background, this study aims to reconstruct Ahmad Amin's concept of literary criticism through *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, focusing on the nature and functions of literary criticism, the relationship between interpretation and evaluation, and his views on objectivity and the qualifications of literary critics. It further situates Ahmad Amin's thought within the broader development of modern Arabic literary criticism while examining its relevance to contemporary debates on literary criticism in the age of Artificial Intelligence. In doing so, this study contributes to literary criticism by positioning Ahmad Amin as a transitional thinker who successfully bridged the evaluative tradition of classical Arabic criticism with the interpretive and systematic approaches of modern criticism, thereby demonstrating the continuing significance of his thought in the era of AI-assisted literary scholarship.

⁶ Dong, Fangzhou, Yifan Zeng, Yingpeng Sang, and Hong Shen. *Structuralist Approach to AI Literary Criticism: Leveraging Greimas Semiotic Square for Large Language Models*. June 26, 2025.

⁷ Bolaños, Francisco, Angelo Salatino, Francesco Osborne, and Enrico Motta. “Artificial Intelligence for Literature Reviews: Opportunities and Challenges.” *Artificial Intelligence Review* 57, no. 10 (August 2024): 259. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-024-10902-3>.

Method

This study employed a library research design to examine Ahmad Amin's conception of literary criticism as articulated in *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*.⁸ A library-based approach was considered appropriate because the object of the study consists of theoretical ideas, concepts, and arguments preserved in written sources. The primary source was Ahmad Amin's *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, while secondary sources included scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and previous studies on Arabic literary criticism, modern Arab intellectual history, and contemporary literary criticism.

To reconstruct Ahmad Amin's critical thought, the study adopted an intellectual history approach. This approach enabled the analysis of his ideas within the broader intellectual transformation of modern Arabic literary criticism rather than treating them as isolated theoretical propositions.⁹ Ahmad Amin's critical concepts were therefore interpreted as responses to the intellectual debates surrounding the transition from the evaluative tradition of classical Arabic literary criticism to the interpretive and scientific approaches introduced through engagement with Western literary thought.

Data were collected through documentary research using close reading and systematic note-taking. Relevant passages in *Al-Naqd al-Adabī* were carefully examined to identify major concepts related to the nature and functions of literary criticism, the relationship between interpretation and evaluation, normative and inductive criticism, objectivity, and the qualifications of an ideal literary critic. The identified data were subsequently classified into thematic categories according to their conceptual relationships.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analytical process consisted of three stages. The first stage involved data reduction by selecting and organizing textual evidence relevant to the research objectives. The second stage focused on categorization and interpretation, in which the extracted data were organized into conceptual themes—such as interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, and scientific approaches to literary criticism—and examined to reveal their interrelationships within Ahmad Amin's theoretical framework. The

⁸ George, Mary W. *The Elements of Library Research*. Princeton University Press, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400830411>.

⁹ Lamb, Robert. "Quentin Skinner's Revised Historical Contextualism: A Critique." *History of the Human Sciences* 22, no. 3 (July 2009): 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695109104423>.

final stage involved synthesis and interpretation, through which the findings were integrated into a coherent analytical narrative to explain Ahmad Amin's position in the development of modern Arabic literary criticism.

To enhance the contemporary relevance of the study, the reconstructed concepts were further discussed in dialogue with recent scholarship on AI-assisted literary criticism. Artificial Intelligence was not treated as the object of investigation but rather as an interpretive context through which the contemporary significance of Ahmad Amin's ideas on interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, and human judgment could be critically reassessed. This approach enabled the study not only to reconstruct Ahmad Amin's theory of literary criticism but also to demonstrate its conceptual relevance to contemporary debates on literary criticism in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Results and Discussion

An analysis of *Al-Naqd al-Adabī* reveals that Ahmad Amin developed a concept of literary criticism that occupies a pivotal transitional position in the evolution of modern Arabic literary criticism. Unlike the classical critical tradition, which primarily regarded criticism as an instrument for evaluating the quality of literary works, Ahmad Amin expanded its scope into an intellectual activity encompassing interpretation, evaluation, and the explanation of literary meaning. In his view, literary criticism is not merely concerned with determining whether a work is aesthetically good or poor; rather, it seeks to facilitate readers' understanding of its values, structure, meaning, and relationship to human experience and the social realities from which it emerges. Literary criticism thus functions as a bridge connecting the text, the author, and the reader through a process of rational and well-grounded interpretation.

This perspective indicates that Ahmad Amin did not regard literary criticism as an activity devoted solely to aesthetic judgment. Critical evaluation, in his view, must be preceded by a comprehensive understanding of the literary work. Consequently, literary criticism cannot be separated from the critic's intellectual competence, broad scholarly knowledge, and aesthetic sensitivity (*dhawq*). Rather than being a purely subjective response, *dhawq* is understood as a cultivated capacity developed through extensive reading, intellectual training, and literary experience. Literary criticism therefore represents the integration of rational inquiry and aesthetic sensibility.

The analysis further demonstrates that Ahmad Amin's theory of literary criticism rests upon two interdependent functions: interpretation and evaluation. The critic's primary responsibility is to interpret literary works by examining their structural elements, explaining the relationships among textual components, uncovering the ideas underlying their composition, and assisting readers in recognizing meanings that may not be immediately apparent. Effective criticism therefore extends beyond identifying strengths and weaknesses; it explains how particular literary elements generate aesthetic effects and construct meaning within the text.

Once interpretation has been adequately accomplished, criticism proceeds to its evaluative function. Literary judgment should not be based on immediate impressions or personal preferences but must emerge from a comprehensive understanding of the work under examination. For Ahmad Amin, evaluation constitutes the logical continuation of interpretation. In other words, sound critical judgment is possible only after a critic has achieved a thorough understanding of the literary text. This position overcomes the dichotomy between criticism as interpretation and criticism as judgment by treating both as complementary stages within a unified critical process.

The conceptual structure of Ahmad Amin's literary criticism is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. The Conceptual Structure of Ahmad Amin's Literary Criticism

Dimension	Main Characteristics	Purpose
Interpretation	Explaining meaning, structure, context, and underlying ideas	To facilitate a deeper understanding of literary works
Evaluation	Assessing aesthetic and intellectual quality	To determine the literary value and significance of a work
Objectivity	Controlling personal bias through rational argumentation	To produce balanced and credible criticism
<i>Dhawq</i> and Intellectual Competence	Aesthetic sensitivity supported by broad knowledge	To strengthen both interpretation and evaluation
Scientific Criticism	Systematic analysis grounded in logical reasoning	To enhance the credibility of literary criticism

Table 1 demonstrates that Ahmad Amin's theory is constructed upon the integration of interpretation, evaluation, objectivity, and intellectual competence. None of these dimensions functions independently. Interpretation without evaluation reduces criticism to mere textual explanation, whereas evaluation without interpretation leads to superficial and subjective judgment. Likewise, objectivity cannot be achieved solely through personal intention but requires intellectual breadth, rational argumentation, and a comprehensive understanding of the literary work.

Another prominent aspect of Ahmad Amin's literary criticism is his emphasis on objectivity. He recognized that every critic inevitably brings personal educational, intellectual, and cultural backgrounds that may influence critical judgment. Nevertheless, he rejected the notion that literary criticism is inherently subjective. Instead, he argued that critics should strive to approach literary works impartially by restraining personal preferences and grounding their judgments in reasoned argumentation. Objectivity, therefore, does not imply the complete elimination of subjectivity but represents a continuous intellectual effort to minimize bias and strengthen the rational foundations of criticism.

This understanding is closely related to Ahmad Amin's conception of the literary critic. He maintained that the quality of criticism ultimately depends upon the intellectual and ethical qualities of the critic. An ideal critic possesses intellectual honesty, extensive knowledge, analytical precision, and the capacity to understand reality in a balanced manner. Consequently, literary criticism is not merely a methodological enterprise but also an ethical one. Sound criticism emerges from the integration of scholarly competence and intellectual integrity, making objectivity not only a methodological principle but also an ethical commitment.

Ahmad Amin's reflections also reveal his position regarding the transformation of modern Arabic literary criticism. He distinguished between normative criticism (*al-naqd al-ḥukmī*), which evaluates literary works according to predetermined standards, and inductive criticism (*al-naqd al-istidlālī*), which derives critical judgment from careful observation of the literary text itself. While appreciating the scientific and analytical strengths of the inductive approach, Ahmad Amin did not abandon the evaluative function that characterized normative criticism. Instead, he sought to integrate both approaches into a balanced and coherent critical framework.

This integrative perspective positions Ahmad Amin as a transitional figure in the evolution of modern Arabic literary criticism. He embraced the scientific principles associated with modern criticism while preserving the evaluative values inherited from the classical Arabic critical tradition. His contribution therefore lies not in rejecting tradition or uncritically embracing modernity, but in synthesizing both into a coherent framework that laid the intellectual foundations for a more systematic form of Arabic literary criticism without sacrificing aesthetic evaluation.

Ahmad Amin's position within the development of modern Arabic literary criticism is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Ahmad Amin's Position in the Development of Modern Arabic Literary Criticism

Classical Critical Tradition	Ahmad Amin	Modern Criticism
Evaluation-oriented	Balanced integration of interpretation and evaluation	Interpretation-oriented
Normative standards	Rational and argumentative standards	Scientific analysis
Emphasis on literary quality	Emphasis on understanding and evaluation	Emphasis on explanation and interpretation
Authority of tradition	Synthesis of tradition and modernity	Authority of method

Table 2 illustrates Ahmad Amin's mediating position between two major paradigms in literary criticism. While preserving the evaluative function inherited from classical criticism, he simultaneously embraced the interpretive and scientific approaches characteristic of modern criticism. His critical thought is therefore best understood as an intellectual synthesis rather than either traditional conservatism or radical modernism.

A contemporary reading of Ahmad Amin's literary criticism further demonstrates its relevance in the age of Artificial Intelligence. The emergence of AI systems capable of analyzing and interpreting literary texts has revived the long-standing debate concerning the relationship between interpretation and evaluation. Contemporary AI models can summarize literary works, identify themes, classify stylistic features, and generate textual interpretations with remarkable speed.

Nevertheless, these capabilities remain largely confined to textual interpretation and computational pattern recognition. AI can assist in explaining literary texts, identifying intertextual relationships, and generating alternative interpretations based on existing data.

However, Ahmad Amin's theory suggests that literary criticism extends beyond interpretation alone. It also requires aesthetic evaluation, value judgment, and intellectual responsibility—dimensions that cannot be fully reduced to computational processes. From Ahmad Amin's perspective, the quality of criticism depends not only on explanatory ability but also on the capacity to make balanced judgments grounded in experience, intellectual maturity, and aesthetic sensitivity. These dimensions remain fundamentally human.

Moreover, Ahmad Amin's discussion of objectivity acquires renewed relevance in the context of Artificial Intelligence. Whereas the principal source of bias in traditional criticism originates from the critic's personal perspectives, bias in AI-assisted criticism may emerge from training datasets, algorithmic design, and computational knowledge structures. Consequently, Ahmad Amin's emphasis on rational argumentation, intellectual openness, and critical awareness of bias remains highly applicable to contemporary literary criticism.

Overall, the findings indicate that Ahmad Amin proposed an integrated model of literary criticism in which interpretation and evaluation constitute inseparable components of the critical process. Such a model enables literary criticism to preserve its intellectual function amid rapid technological change. Within the context of AI-assisted literary criticism, Ahmad Amin's thought suggests that Artificial Intelligence may serve as an effective interpretive tool but cannot replace the human critic as the ultimate agent of aesthetic judgment and intellectual responsibility. His contribution therefore extends beyond the historical development of modern Arabic literary criticism, offering a conceptual framework for understanding the future of literary criticism in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Ahmad Amin's conception of literary criticism occupies a distinctive position within the development of modern Arabic literary criticism by reconciling two approaches that have often been regarded as mutually exclusive: criticism as evaluation

and criticism as interpretation.¹⁰ In the classical Arabic critical tradition, literary criticism primarily functioned as an evaluative practice through which literary works were assessed according to established aesthetic and linguistic standards.¹¹ By contrast, the emergence of modern literary criticism, particularly under the influence of Western intellectual traditions, shifted the emphasis toward interpretation, explanation, and the understanding of textual meaning.¹² Through *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, Ahmad Amin rejected this dichotomy by arguing that interpretation and evaluation are complementary rather than competing functions. Careful interpretation provides the necessary foundation for rational evaluation, while evaluation gives direction and purpose to interpretation. Literary criticism, therefore, should not be confined to explaining textual meaning but should also assess the aesthetic and intellectual value of literary works on the basis of comprehensive understanding.

This position closely resonates with René Wellek's conception of literary criticism, which regards interpretation and evaluation as two inseparable dimensions of critical inquiry.¹³ Nevertheless, Ahmad Amin developed this synthesis within the intellectual context of modern Arabic literary criticism during the *Nahḍah*. Whereas some modern critics tended to minimize evaluative judgment in favor of greater scientific objectivity, Ahmad Amin maintained that evaluation remains an indispensable component of literary criticism.¹⁴ In his view, criticism loses its intellectual significance when it merely explains literary texts without offering informed judgments concerning their quality and cultural significance. His principal theoretical contribution, therefore, lies in integrating interpretive and evaluative dimensions into a coherent and balanced framework of literary criticism.

¹⁰ Gillespie, Tim. "Getting Started: Classroom Practices That Support the Study of Literary Criticism." In *Doing Literary Criticism*, 19–52. New York: Routledge, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003579083-2>.

¹¹ حسين بن محمد القرني. "الجهود النقدية العربية في النقد، عسيري، عبدالقادر إبراهيم يوسف" *Arts for Linguistic & Literary Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 212–35. <https://doi.org/10.53286/gw8ynw49>.

¹² "The Arab Literary Criticism between Modernity and Globalization." *Journal of Social Studies* 31, no. 1 (January 2025). <https://doi.org/10.20428/jss.v31i1.2712>.

¹³ René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 245–26.

¹⁴ M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 11th ed. (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015), 63–70.

Another significant aspect of Ahmad Amin's literary thought is his emphasis on objectivity as the ethical foundation of literary criticism.¹⁵ The findings indicate that objectivity, in his view, should not be understood as complete detachment from human experience or value-neutral observation. Rather, Ahmad Amin recognized that every critic inevitably brings educational, social, intellectual, and aesthetic backgrounds that shape the process of literary judgment. However, acknowledging the existence of subjectivity does not lead him to embrace relativism. Instead, he argues that critics should consciously restrain personal preferences through broad intellectual knowledge, rigorous analysis, and rational argumentation. Accordingly, objectivity is better understood as a continuous intellectual endeavor rather than a fixed condition achieved independently of human experience.¹⁶

This perspective places Ahmad Amin between the extremes of absolute objectivism and radical subjectivism. He neither assumes that literary criticism can be entirely free from personal influence nor reduces criticism to an expression of individual taste lacking argumentative justification. In this respect, his thought bears certain affinities with the hermeneutic tradition, which understands interpretation as a dialogical process between the interpreter and the text while maintaining the importance of rational inquiry characteristic of modern scholarship.¹⁷ Consequently, objectivity in literary criticism should be viewed as a form of intellectual responsibility rather than merely a methodological procedure. The quality of criticism depends not only on analytical methods but also on the critic's intellectual honesty, scholarly competence, and willingness to place the literary work above personal interests.

The findings further support recent interpretations suggesting that the modernization of Arabic literary criticism should be understood as a process of negotiation between the classical critical heritage and the introduction of Western critical paradigms rather than as a complete

¹⁵ Aḥmad Amīn, *Al-Naqd al-Adabī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), 33–41.

¹⁶ René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), 221–245.

¹⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1989), 295–307.

replacement of tradition.¹⁸ Within this context, Ahmad Amin can be regarded as a transitional figure in the history of modern Arabic literary criticism. Living during a period of profound intellectual transformation marked by increasing engagement with European thought, the expansion of modern educational institutions, and the emergence of new critical methodologies, he confronted the challenge of balancing classical heritage with modern intellectual developments.¹⁹ Rather than adopting Western criticism uncritically or adhering rigidly to classical traditions, Ahmad Amin embraced scientific reasoning, rational analysis, and inductive methods while preserving the evaluative function that had long characterized classical Arabic criticism. His approach therefore represents a reconstruction of tradition rather than its rejection.²⁰

This transitional position explains Ahmad Amin's enduring influence on the evolution of modern Arabic literary criticism.²¹ He served as an intellectual bridge between the pioneering generation of Arab reformers and later scholars who further systematized literary criticism. By integrating evaluative traditions with interpretive and scientific approaches, Ahmad Amin contributed to the establishment of a critical framework that avoided both excessive conservatism and radical modernism.²² His contribution is therefore not only historical but also methodological, offering a model of literary criticism capable of reconciling competing paradigms within literary studies.

Ahmad Amin's literary-critical thought acquires renewed significance when examined in the context of Artificial Intelligence and its growing application to literary analysis.²³ AI systems are now capable of generating summaries, identifying themes, detecting narrative

¹⁸ Muhammad Jillul Qur'aniyul Farid and Rangga Iskandar Julkarnain, "Modernization of Post-Al-Nahdah Arabic Literary Criticism," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 11, no. 2 (2025): 1142–1153, <https://doi.org/10.58258/jime.v11i2.8628>.

¹⁹ Ruly Syaepul Azhar et al., "Methodological Trends in Classical and Modern Arabic Literary Criticism: A Comparative Study on the Evolution of Arabic Literary Criticism," *Ibtikar* 14, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.24235/ibtikar.v14i2.21413>.

²⁰ Ahmad Amīn, *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, 67–103.

²¹ Berensmeyer, Ingo. "The Ethics of Authorship in Modern Literary Criticism." In *Handbook of Literary Criticism and Ethics*, 282–303. BRILL, 2026. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004715516_014.

²² Omar, Moussa. "Towards Digital Arabic Criticism: A Contemporary Vision of Literary Criticism in the Digital Age." *Arabic Language, Literature & Culture* 11, no. 1 (June 2026): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.allc.20261101.11>.

²³ Carte, Donald Thomas. "Harmonizing Literary Criticism: How AI Can Help Resurrect the Author and Unite the Banners of Literary Theory." *Literature* 6, no. 1 (February 2026): 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/literature6010003>.

structures, and producing literary interpretations with remarkable efficiency. To some extent, these developments demonstrate that certain interpretive functions of literary criticism can be effectively supported by computational technologies. AI excels at processing extensive textual data and identifying intertextual relationships that would be difficult to detect through conventional manual analysis.²⁴ Consequently, Ahmad Amin's emphasis on interpretation as the foundation of literary criticism gains renewed relevance, highlighting that meaningful evaluation must always be preceded by careful textual understanding.

Nevertheless, Ahmad Amin's theory also clarifies the limitations of AI-assisted literary criticism. While AI can substantially contribute to textual interpretation and analytical explanation, literary criticism, in Ahmad Amin's conception, extends beyond interpretation to encompass aesthetic evaluation, value judgment, and intellectual responsibility rooted in human experience.²⁵ The ability of AI to generate sophisticated interpretations does not automatically qualify it as a literary critic in the fullest sense. Literary criticism requires judgments concerning aesthetic value, human meaning, cultural context, and intellectual significance that cannot be fully reduced to computational processing or statistical language patterns.²⁶

Moreover, Ahmad Amin's discussion of objectivity becomes increasingly relevant in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Whereas traditional criticism primarily confronted biases arising from the critic's personal perspectives, AI-assisted criticism introduces new forms of bias embedded within training datasets, algorithmic architectures, and culturally conditioned knowledge representations.²⁷ Technological

²⁴ K, Priyadharshini., V. R. Yasu Bharathi, J. Mercy Navis Abinaya, Revathy J, Angala Parameswari D, C. Suganya, and Kunal Shejul. "AI-Driven Sentiment and Context Analysis in English Literature for Enhanced Interpretation and Literary Criticism." *2026 IEEE 2nd International Conference on Quantum Photonics, Artificial Intelligence & Networking (QPAIN)*, April 16, 2026, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1109/QPAIN69676.2026.11546483>.

²⁵ Aljuraid, Njood, Ghadeer Alanazi, and Ohoud Alharbi. "Enhancing Arabic Chatbots: Addressing Dialectal Challenges and Proposed Solutions Using Generative AI." Preprint, February 2, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.36227/techrxiv.177004924.44584773/v1>.

²⁶ Herrera, Philip Donald Pepito. *Perceptions, Roles, Considerations, and Practices in Literary Criticism in the Age of AI*. 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-1057-2.ch011>.

²⁷ R D, Gomathi, Murugan J, Kavitha P, and Gomathi B S. "AI-Driven Literary Analysis: Exploring the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Text Interpretation and

advancement therefore does not eliminate the problem of objectivity but merely transforms its sources. Ahmad Amin's insistence on rational argumentation, critical awareness of bias, and intellectual integrity remains highly applicable to contemporary literary criticism, becoming even more essential as interpretation increasingly involves complex computational systems whose decision-making processes are often opaque.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that Ahmad Amin's principal contribution to contemporary literary criticism lies in his formulation of an integrated critical model that combines interpretation and evaluation, conceptualizes objectivity as an ongoing argumentative process, and emphasizes intellectual responsibility as the ethical foundation of criticism. Within the context of Artificial Intelligence, this framework provides a valuable conceptual basis for integrating technological advances into literary criticism without sacrificing its fundamentally human dimension. AI may serve as a powerful interpretive assistant capable of extending human analytical capacities, but aesthetic judgment, critical reflection, and intellectual responsibility ultimately remain the responsibility of human critics. Ahmad Amin's thought therefore represents not only a significant contribution to the history of modern Arabic literary criticism but also a relevant theoretical framework for understanding the future of literary criticism in the age of Artificial Intelligence.

Criticism.” *Journal of Machine and Computing*, April 5, 2025, 1124–39. <https://doi.org/10.53759/7669/jmc202505089>.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Ahmad Amin conceptualized literary criticism as an intellectual activity that integrates the complementary functions of interpretation and evaluation. Through *Al-Naqd al-Adabī*, he defines literary criticism not merely as a means of assessing the quality of literary works but also as a process of understanding, explaining, and interpreting their meanings. The findings further reveal that, in Ahmad Amin's thought, interpretation and evaluation are mutually reinforcing, with valid critical judgment necessarily grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the literary text. Moreover, he identifies objectivity, broad intellectual knowledge, aesthetic sensibility (*dhawq*), and intellectual integrity as the essential qualifications of an ideal literary critic. Within the development of modern Arabic literary criticism, Ahmad Amin occupies a transitional position by bridging the evaluative tradition of classical Arabic criticism with the interpretive and scientific approaches that emerged during the modern period. His principal contribution therefore lies in constructing a coherent synthesis between the intellectual heritage of classical Arabic criticism and the methodological demands of modern literary criticism.

These findings have important theoretical implications for contemporary literary criticism. They suggest that literary criticism should not be reduced to either interpretation or evaluation alone but should instead be understood as an integrated intellectual process that combines both within a framework of rational argumentation and scholarly responsibility. In the context of Artificial Intelligence, Ahmad Amin's theory provides a valuable conceptual foundation for positioning AI as an interpretive tool capable of extending textual analysis without displacing the uniquely human capacity for aesthetic judgment and intellectual reflection. Nevertheless, this study is limited to reconstructing Ahmad Amin's literary-critical thought through *Al-Naqd al-Adabī* and does not include a comparative analysis with other modern Arab literary critics or empirical investigations of AI-assisted literary criticism. Future research is therefore encouraged to undertake comparative studies between Ahmad Amin's critical theory and contemporary literary criticism, as well as to explore more extensively the relevance of interpretation, objectivity, and evaluation in AI-assisted literary analysis.

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