

The Development of Literary Vision from Tradition to Modernity in Modern Arab Thought

Dr. Warda Larab¹

Chadli Bendjedid University of El Tarf, Algeria
Laboratory of Heritage and Linguistic Studies, (Algeria)
Email : w.larab@univ-eltarf.dz

Received: 28/08/2025 ; **Accepted:** 17/02/2026 ; **Published:** 01/05/2026

Abstract:

The literary vision within modern Arab thought evolved from a conformist conception dominated by inherited tradition and adherence to established canonical forms to a modernist perspective shaped by engagement with the Western Other in the context of the nineteenth-century Nahda. These transformations emerged as part of a broader effort to reconsider the concepts of literature, its genres, and its functions. Calls for the exercise of reason in critically reexamining the heritage became increasingly prominent, and literature came to be regarded as a medium for articulating human and social concerns, as well as historical transformations. It also assumed the role of raising questions and engaging debates surrounding issues of freedom and identity. Literary discourse was thus emancipated from fixed rhetorical structures and reconstituted as a creative act actively participating in the shaping of a present open to the transformations of the age.

Keywords: literary vision; tradition; modernity; transition; rigidity.

1. Introduction:

The literary vision experienced major changes during the early modern period because it evolved from relying on inherited traditions to exploring new directions which stemmed from Western Other interactions during the Nahda movement of the nineteenth century. The artistic transformation process attempted to redefine literary concepts and their artistic value and functional value yet it maintained a connection to Arab cultural heritage.

Rhetoric stood as the only system which guaranteed creative success because it based its principles on communication and emotional response from the audience and sensibility activation and achieved the highest level of aesthetic value while promoting the study of fundamental creative models which serve as perfect examples. (Huriya 2015–2016), The orientation which developed through this process established a static system which blocked creative thinking and stopped both innovation and renewal from taking place.

The modern Arab renaissance brought new energy to Arabic literature through Western cultural contact and translation movement growth and educational institution development and printing expansion and social and cultural changes in society. Writers started using different writing techniques while they created fresh literary structures which explored various themes during this period. People started to view literature as a way to show what matters to individuals and their communities which led to expanded literary objectives and new purposes for writing and it moved past the traditional monorhymed qaṣīda which used to focus on praise and description and love poetry.

The poets Adonis and Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Nāzik al-Malā'ika brought a new poetic movement through their tafīla-based free verse which transformed both poetic structure and thematic elements. Literary discourse started to focus on heritage analysis instead of uniting past and present elements through systematic evaluation of historical material. The intellectual perspective of modernity rejected Western model duplication because it based its understanding on historical awareness and maintained an active mindset which supported innovative approaches.

1. Intellectual Transformations in the Thought of Ahmad Amin and Jurji Zaydan:

1.1 Ahmad Amin:

Ahmad Amin stands as a major figure who established the foundation of rationalist philosophy. The author created about sixteen books which many readers believe he wrote but his actual literary work surpasses this number. The researchers who determined this number based their work on officially printed materials but they failed to include his numerous unprinted articles and radio programs and academic presentations. The existing collection of materials would allow for the creation of at least ten new books. (Amer 1981, p. 82) His intellectual transformations manifested across several levels:

1.1.1 Re-reading the Heritage:

Ahmad Amin conducted a detailed study of Islamic intellectual heritage which he followed specific academic methods to achieve. The author used historical analysis to study the topic instead of showing blind admiration. His approach to life showed itself through both his creative output and the way he brought life to Arab cultural traditions. The author showed his readers how to become encyclopedic thinkers through his example of combining academic accuracy with moral values and social duty. The author selected a path of logical balance because he believed that understanding historical facts through objective methods must come first before we can build an intentional future. His method stands as his most important inheritance because he taught young people to analyze their heritage through useful methods which they used to protect their individual identities while developing their self-awareness. The person exists as a complete creator of contemporary Arab knowledge because he trained his knowledge to others. (Tamer, 2025) The following example demonstrates this point:

- *Fajr al-Islam*: First published in 1929, this work examines intellectual life in Islam. In it, Ahmad Amin introduced a new model of analytical writing on the intellectual formation of the Islamic community. He surprised readers with an innovative research methodology, style, and set of conclusions, to the extent that the book became foundational for subsequent scholars. Ahmad Amin organized it into seven chapters comprising multiple sections. He addressed the Arabian Peninsula in terms of its geographical location, regions, climate, population, and divisions; discussed the Arabs' contact with neighboring peoples; examined the two Arab principalities in Syria and Iraq—the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids; and considered Judaism and Christianity. In this regard, he was influenced by *On Pre-Islamic Poetry*. He also addressed the language of Quraysh. (Bayyumi, 2001, p. 51)
- *Duḥā al-Islām*: Published in three substantial volumes, the first addresses social life and the diverse cultural formations of the early 'Abbāsīd period. The second examines the emergence of the sciences and their subsequent development. The third discusses the principal religious movements—namely the Mu'tazilites, the Shī'a, and the Khārijites—while also surveying their political history and the distinctive character of their literary expression. This work is regarded as one of Aḥmad Amīn's most distinguished achievements and is indisputably counted among the treasures of Islamic intellectual heritage. (Bayyumi, 2001, p. 67)

- *Zu‘amā’ al-Iṣlāḥ fī al-‘Aṣr al-Ḥadīth*: this book has become widely known because schools used it as a required text for their students throughout many academic years while printing multiple editions. The book contains life stories of ten important reformers who lived during the modern age including Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad ‘Abduh and ‘Alī Mubārak from Egypt and Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī and Sayyid Muḥammad Khān from India and several others who lived in Ḥijāz and Levant regions. The volume contains various essays which discuss political and historical and religious matters through its consistent and flowing writing style to create a dual-purpose educational resource. (Bayyumi, 2001, p. 93)
 - *Fayḍ al-Khāṭir*: A vast collection of modern Arabic non-fiction essays exists in this prose compilation which includes works that appeared in al-Risāla and al-Hilāl publications and some that never reached publication. (Abd al-Karim 1430, pp. 232–233) The collection contained various subjects which spanned social matters and literary topics to create ten volumes that contained about nine hundred essays. The book found its way into readers' hearts through their warm reception and intellectual community members eagerly awaited Aḥmad Amīn’s weekly articles. (Abd al-Karim 1430, p93) The essays present readers with elevated language and multiple themes and passionate emotional expressions throughout the text. (Abd al-Karim 1430, pp. 117–118)
 - *Zuḥr al-Islām*: Published in four volumes, the first—arguably the most substantial—constitutes a continuation of the *Duḥā al-Islām* and *Fajr al-Islām* series. In it, Aḥmad Amīn addresses social life, offering extensive accounts of the populations of the Islamic realm—Arabs, Persians, Turks, Byzantines, and Kurds—and their diverse literary orientations. He examines political developments, the fragmentation of the state into several principalities, and the effects of this division on intellectual and literary activity, as well as the ensuing manifestations of familial and social disintegration. The second volume is devoted to centers of intellectual life during this period, while the third focuses exclusively on al-Andalus. As for the fourth volume, Aḥmad Amīn passed away before its publication; Dr. Aḥmad Fu’ād al-Ahwānī subsequently undertook, at the request of Aḥmad Amīn’s family, the editing and publication of the manuscript papers. (Ahmad, 2014)
 - *Islam at Its Zenith*: This is the fourth volume in his Islamic encyclopedic series, which includes *The Dawn of Islam*, *The Forenoon of Islam*, and *The Noon of Islam*. In this work, Ahmad Amin presents a comprehensive portrayal of Islam across successive historical epochs, elucidating the factors that led to its decline. To this end, he draws upon the entirety of Islamic history, identifying the genuine causes of weakness so that reformers may discern the appropriate instruments of renewal. (Ahmad 2018)
 - *Brigandage and Chivalry in Islam*: In this book, Ahmad Amin traces the terms *futuwwa* (chivalry) and *ṣu‘lūka* (brigandage) in their evolving meanings across different historical periods, from the pre-Islamic era to the time of the book’s composition. The first edition was published in 1951.
- 1.1.2 The Ethical and Social Dimensions of Thought:**
- Ahmad Amin emphasized the impact of intellectual life on social reform, maintaining that true renaissance can only be achieved through the simultaneous reform of thought and conduct. This orientation is manifested in the following works:
- *My Life*: serves as Ahmad Amin's autobiography which presents his complete life story through detailed descriptions of important events and significant people who shaped his personal development. He tells his life story starting from his early years until he finished his education at

kuttāb and primary school and then al-Azhar and the School of Judiciary before he describes his professional roles and all the scholars he met during his career.

- *Dictionary of Egyptian Customs and Traditions*: This work reflects Ahmad Amin's deep engagement with Egyptian life. The book presents various Egyptian cultural practices together with their traditional customs and their unique forms of communication. The book contains two main sections which start with an overview of why the author wrote the book then continue with alphabetical entries. The total number of entries is twenty-eight, corresponding to the letters of the Arabic alphabet. The dictionary presents its content through an amusing style which uses stories and clever remarks and folk sayings to keep readers interested while reading and maintain their attention throughout the entire text. (Ahmad, 2013)
- *The Story of Literature in the World*: Ahmad Amin authored this work in four volumes in collaboration with Dr. Zaki Naguib Mahmoud. It addresses literature across the world—East and West, ancient and modern. (Ahmad, 2013p 127)
- *The Mahdi and Mahdism*: In this book, Ahmad Amin explicates the concept of the Mahdi and Mahdism, which has played a significant role in Islam from the first century up to the time of writing. He argues that the human psyche abhors injustice and yearns for justice; when justice fails to materialize in reality, people retreat into imagination, within which they seek fulfillment. In the idea of the Mahdi, they found the realization of their aspirations. Consequently, this notion proliferated across various religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Ahmad Amin thus sought to elucidate the concept and trace its historical development from its earliest origins. The book is divided into ten chapters, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. (Ahmad, 2012)
- *Harun al-Rashid*: In the introduction to this work, Ahmad Amin explains that the book was written at the request of Dar al-Hilal, a commission that greatly pleased him, as he admired the personality of Harun al-Rashid for his many qualities. He therefore composed the text in a clear and accessible modern style suited to a broad readership, avoiding excessive scholarly depth that might render it cumbersome and refraining from burdening it with extensive citation of sources, as is customary among academic historians and their like. (Ahmad, 2014)
- *The East and the West*: In the introduction to *The East and the West*, Ahmad Amin notes that he was invited to participate in the Round Table Conference held in London to discuss the Palestinian question. His visit to Europe that year had a profound impact on the formation of his sentiments toward the Arabs, and he began to question the prevailing belief in the superiority of the West over the East in matters of civilization. He observed patterns of ethics, customs, and traditions that differed markedly from those in his homeland. Consequently, hundreds of questions crowded his mind—questions he sought to answer for himself and for others. He therefore chose to articulate them in this book, calling upon the Eastern individual to reclaim his rightful place. (Ahmad, 2017)

1.2 Jurjī Zaydān:

Jurjī Zaydān is regarded as one of the foremost figures of the modern literary renaissance and a leading authority in scholarship. He held a preeminent position in both history and literature and was among the first whose historical works and novels on the history of Islam gained wide circulation among intellectual circles. Through his extensive scholarly, literary, and journalistic writings, he succeeded in appealing to diverse social strata. He was a distinguished mentor under whose guidance a considerable number of writers were trained, and he supported men of letters through his editorial corrections and guidance. (Ahmad, 2017,p58)

Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad ‘Awaḍ remarked upon the magnitude of Zaydān’s literary output, observing that, were it not for our certain and unequivocal knowledge that he single-handedly authored this entire corpus without assistance, doubt might well have arisen as to whether he had indeed produced it independently. Such doubt would stem from the sheer scale and formidable scope of his achievement. Those who undertake to classify the subjects addressed in Zaydān’s writings readily observe that they encompass history, biography, memoirs, geography, the history of Arabic literature, sociology, and the historical novel. (Hasan ,n.ed, p 29), Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī Ḥasan enumerates them according to subject as follows: Hasan ,n.ed, p. 229)

1.2.1 Historical Works:

Jurjī Zaydān introduced a significant transformation in the writing of Arab history by rendering it accessible to the general reader rather than confining it to an intellectual elite:

- *The History of Islamic Civilization*: First published in 1902, this work appeared in five volumes comprising nearly twelve hundred pages. It is richly illustrated with numerous images, drawings, maps, and explanatory diagrams. The work was reviewed critically by several scholars, including Ya‘qūb Ṣarrūf in *al-Muqtataf*, Muṣṭafā Jawād in *Majallat al-‘Irfān*, and the Jesuit Father Louis Cheikho in *al-Mashriq*.
- *The Modern History of Egypt with an Introduction on the Sacred History of Ancient Egypt*: Its first edition was published in 1889. In this work, the author incorporated his personal observations of events in Egypt during his lifetime, as well as accounts of the period of British occupation and his eyewitness impressions of the British Nile expedition to the Sudan to rescue Gordon Pasha.
- *Arabs before Islam*: Only one volume of this work was published in 1908, and the remaining volumes were never issued thereafter. It was subject to critique in the journals *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Mashriq*. A recent annotated and critically edited edition has been published by Dr. Hussein Mu’nis.
- *General History from Creation to the Present*: The first volume was published in Beirut in 1890, but the project was never completed.
- *History of England up to the Bourke Government*: Published by al-Hilal Press in 1899, this is a concise historical work of no more than eighty pages.
- *General History of Freemasonry*: Published in 1889, it was criticized on the grounds that its author adopted fanciful and juvenile interpretations, presenting them as established facts.
- *History of the Greeks and Romans*: Published in Egypt without a specified date.
- *The Classes of Nations or the Human Races*: Its first edition appeared in Cairo through al-Hilal Press. It was subjected to several critiques, notably by Ya‘qub Sarruf in *al-Muqtataf*, Father Mari al-Karmali in *Lughat al-‘Arab*, and Father Louis Cheikho in *al-Mashriq*.
- *The Origins of the Ancient Arabs*: Printed in 1921, several years after Zaydan’s death, it did not achieve significant circulation.

1.2.2 Historical Novels:

Zaydan authored twenty-two historical novels through which he succeeded in attracting an immeasurable readership. Among his earliest works are *The Fugitive Mamluk*, *The Ghassanid Maiden*, *Armanousa the Egyptian*, *The Virgin of Quraysh*, *17 Ramadan*, *The Lady of Karbala*, *Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf*, *The Conquest of al-Andalus*, *Charles and ‘Abd al-Rahman*, *Abu Muslim al-Khurasani*, *Al-‘Abbasa*, *Sister of al-Rashid*, *Al-Amin and al-Ma’mun*, *The Bride of Farghana*: Ahmad

ibn Tulun, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir, The Maiden of Kairouan, Saladin and the Intrigues of the Assassins, Shajarat al-Durr, The Ottoman Coup, Muhammad 'Ali, and Jihad al-Muhibbin. (Hasan ,n.ed, p. 97-98)

Undoubtedly, Zaydan's historical novels constituted a novel phenomenon in the nineteenth century. They disseminated the facts of Islamic history in narrative form, thereby facilitating reading and broadening access. He may thus be regarded as the unrivaled founder and pioneer of this genre in a field previously devoid of such literary production. His method of composition was grounded in historical sources: he presented events in a manner designed to captivate readers, preserving historical incidents in their original form while embedding within them a romantic subplot to sustain narrative interest. Indeed, his identity as a historian often predominated in his writing, to the extent that he appended at the end of his novels the sources and references upon which he relied. Nevertheless, his narratives were marked by structural fragmentation, episodic discontinuity, and a lack of sustained plot cohesion, with limited attention devoted to character development. Hasan ,n.ed, p. 100-110)

It remains to be noted that the new approach adopted by Jurji Zaydan in authorship followed the example of a number of Orientalist scholars. In the twentieth century, this method was subsequently pursued by several professors of Arabic literature, authors, and researchers, including al-Rafi'i, Muhammad Hasan Na'il al-Marsafi, Muhammad 'Atif and his colleagues Shaykh Ahmad al-Iskandari and Mahmud Mustafa, al-Sibai' Bayyumi, Muhammad Hashim 'Atiyya, Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat, figures within the Ministry of Education, Father Hanna al-Fakhuri, and Dr. Shawqi Dayf. (Qarl n.d, p 53)

2. Stylistic and Critical Modernity in Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Iḥsān 'Abbās:

2.1 Ṭāhā Ḥusayn:

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn embodies the evolution of Arab intellectual thought in the twentieth century, and his works demonstrate how literature may serve as a vehicle for articulating the challenges and problems confronting society. He employed a critical sensibility that reexamined the heritage through a historical framework, thereby seeking to reconcile tradition with modernity.¹

To the extent that Ṭāhā Ḥusayn encountered hostility, rejection, and accusations of religious deviation, he simultaneously attracted supporters and advocates. Many intellectuals placed their confidence in him, recognizing in his work a sincere sense of responsibility toward his compatriots. They understood that he sought to acquaint them with literary genres that had flourished in Western literature, both ancient—such as the Greek tradition—and modern, particularly the French. He also endeavored to offer a renewed reading of literary history and demonstrated a profound commitment to applied criticism grounded in a synthesis of scholarly rigor and artistic sensibility. He charted an innovative path that combined scientific method, insofar as it pertained to the subject of literary study, with aesthetic insight manifested in textual criticism, the portrayal of authors' personalities, and the cultivation of intellectual pleasure and benefit within the reader. In so doing, he transformed literary history into an intellectual enterprise capable of engaging both reason and emotion.²

Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's corpus is vast, multifaceted, and diverse in orientation. It encompasses nearly one hundred books, in addition to numerous contributions published in newspapers and journals in which he presented his reflections. His intellectual production also extended to radio and television broadcasts, as well as cinematic writing. A writer of multiple talents, he engaged in the composition

1- "Literary Criticism According to Taha Hussein: Major Issues and Analyses," Idarat Nabd al-Arab, published online at nabdalarab.com.

2- Riyad Zaki Qasim, "Taha Hussein: Pioneer of Renewal in the Study of Classical Arabic Literature," Al-Arabi, no. 659, published online at alarabi.nccal.gov.kw.

of fiction, autobiography, literary and journalistic essays, and translated and summarized numerous classical and modern foreign works. He wrote on education and social reform and participated in more than one of the intellectual and literary debates that stirred Egyptian society in the first half of the twentieth century. It is well known that many of his works were first published as articles before being expanded into books, in a manner similar to his contemporaries among opinion leaders such as al-‘Aqqād, Salāmah Mūsā, and Haykal, and most of these appeared initially in periodicals. (Shanufi,2005–2006, p20) Among the works in which his stylistic and critical modernity is most evident—works that laid the foundation for a modern scientific methodology—are the following:

2.1.1 Critical Modernity:

A. *In Commemoration of Abu al-‘Ala’:*

This was the first book he authored. Originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation to the Egyptian University, it was printed and published as a book in 1915. It was later republished under the title *Renewing the Memory of Abu al-‘Ala’*. The work is regarded as one of the most significant contributions to literary and critical studies. In it, Taha Hussein presents a study of the life of Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri, accompanied by a comprehensive examination of his poetry, prose, creed, philosophy, intellectual milieu, and the political and cultural life of his era. (Shanufi,2005–2006,pp 42-43)

B. *On Pre-Islamic Poetry:*

Upon its publication, this book provoked widespread controversy across academic, cultural, and religious circles due to statements perceived as offensive to Islam and as casting doubt upon established religious doctrines. Taha Hussein composed it in 1926, structuring it in accordance with the Cartesian method. In it, he advanced a general theory—namely, the theory of fabrication in pre-Islamic poetry. The book was confiscated and subsequently republished the following year under the title *On Pre-Islamic Literature*, after certain chapters had been removed and others added. (Fatima 2009, p 53) The work comprises seven chapters: the first, “Literature and Its History”; the second, “The Pre-Islamic Arabs”; the third, “The Causes of the Transmission of Poetry”; the fourth, “Poetry and Poets”; the fifth, “The Poetry of Mudar”; the sixth, “Poetry”; and the final chapter, “Pre-Islamic Prose.” In the introduction, Taha Hussein writes: “This is last year’s book; a chapter has been removed and another inserted in its place; additional chapters have been added; and its title has been somewhat altered. I hope that I have succeeded in this second edition. (Taha 2012, p 7)

C. *The Future of Culture in Egypt:*

The book shows a publication year of 1938 according to its opening section. The short work belongs to Tāhā Ḥusayn but it stands as one of his most important contributions. The author created this composition because two important events emerged. The treaty which Egypt and Britain signed in London together with the Montreux Convention between Egypt and European powers brought Egypt most of its foreign autonomy goals and domestic rule objectives. He viewed his literary duties as a writer to deliver his intellectual work which would support Egypt's cultural and educational growth after the nation gained its independence. The second impetus derived from his participation in the Conference of National Committees for Intellectual Cooperation and in the Conference on Higher Education held in Paris. He decided to document the various viewpoints which emerged during these meetings. (Taha, 2014) The book triggered a major discussion among cultural and literary experts who studied the material.

2.2 Stylistic Modernity:

2.2.1 *Al-Ayyām (The Days):*

The autobiography *Al-Ayyām* by Ṭāhā Ḥusayn details his life from childhood through youth while describing the events which shaped those periods and the people he met during that time and his various professional roles throughout his working life. The author created a work through third person narration which caused readers to question its literary classification because some critics considered it a novel while others viewed it as an autobiography and some readers saw it as an autobiographical novel. The book contains three separate sections which each hold twenty chapters of content. The book exists in multiple translated versions which include French and Hebrew and English and Chinese and Russian and German and Persian languages. (Salah 1954, p18)

2.2.2 *Ḥadīth al-Arbi ‘ā’ (Wednesday Talk):*

In the introduction, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn describes this work as a “volume,” for it comprises a collection of extensive studies on pre-Islamic poetry, including that of Imru’ al-Qays and Ṭarafa ibn al-‘Abd, as well as on poets of the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd periods. He examines their poems through detailed exposition, analysis, and critical evaluation, highlighting their rhetorical elegance and verbal artistry.

2.2.3 *Du ‘ā’ al-Karawān (The Call of the Curlew):*

This novel, written by Ṭāhā Ḥusayn in 1934, is among his enduring works of romantic realism. Its events revolve around the lives of Āmina and Hanādī after their uncle expels them from their home. The novel addresses several issues, including the status of women in rural society, the concepts of honor and shame in a traditional social order, and the tension between vengeance and love. It is marked by a creative yet unadorned style that blends lyricism with realism, imbued with emotional intensity and free from conventional affectation.

2.2.4 Critique and Reform:

In this work, Taha Hussein addresses numerous themes and introduces the reader to a range of major works produced by Arab and foreign authors of diverse intellectual backgrounds and orientations, including Yusuf al-Siba‘i, Naguib Mahfouz, Yahya Haqqi, and Albert Camus. He also examines reform-oriented issues related to social justice, education, and juridical *ijtihād*, in addition to the disputes that arose between the author and the venerable al-Azhar institution in Egypt concerning a number of contentious questions.³

2.2.5 The Gods of the Greeks:

This work constitutes a summary of the lectures he delivered on the religious phenomenon among the Greeks, the evolution of their deities, and the impact of these beliefs on the polis. It combines literary narration with classical scholarship. In composing it, Taha Hussein adopted a poetic language that at times inclines toward symbolism.

2.2.6 The Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun:

Published in Cairo in 1925, this is the dissertation through which he obtained his doctorate from the Sorbonne. Originally written in French, it was translated into Arabic by Muhammad ‘Abd Allah ‘Inan. In it, he presents Ibn Khaldun’s views, philosophy, and perspective on life and society, as well as his analyses of social phenomena in Bedouin life and the general characteristics of urban civilization. In doing so, he examines Ibn Khaldun’s intellectual genius while subjecting it to precise critique through systematic rational analysis and an interpretive, argumentative discourse. (Shanufi, 2005–2006, pp 42)

2.2.7 Leaders of Thought:

Published in April 1925, this work advances an integrated conception of the history of civilization. It discusses figures such as Homer, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander of Macedon, and Julius Caesar.

3- Taha Hussein, *Criticism and Reform* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, n.d., n.ed.), front cover.

In presenting them, he does not merely offer biographical accounts of prominent leaders; rather, he treats them as representative figures embodying their respective eras and the environments in which they lived. The work is written in a pedagogical style and lucid language, with a deliberate simplification of philosophical ideas. (Shanufi,2005–2006,pp 43)

2.3 Iḥsān ‘Abbās

Iḥsān ‘Abbās dedicated his life to creating multiple academic disciplines which he used to generate new knowledge. He operated with mental independence while maintaining an open perspective because he possessed complete knowledge of critical approaches which he used to build his personal research system. He consistently affirmed that he was a free and rational thinker, deeply enamored of nature; hence his avid engagement with Latin poetry, particularly its pastoral dimension, which he read with marked enthusiasm. He understood how literature and history existed in a dialectical relationship which also linked personal experiences to established social systems. His vast knowledge of biography and life studies helped him because he knew all the different types of biographical material which he encountered. His literary output included numerous books which he created while simultaneously working as an editor and translator. . (Qarl n.d, p 56)

Iḥsān ‘Abbās received recognition for his extensive academic achievements which included writing and language translation and critical editing work. He wrote more than twenty-five books which covered Arabic criticism and biography and history and he also edited fifty-two significant volumes including essential works from classical heritage and he translated ten important texts from literature and criticism and history. His work established permanent academic traditions which connected different research domains to their respective knowledge areas. (Qarl n.d, p 56)

2.3.1 Stylistic Modernity:

A. Fann al-Shi‘r (The Art of Poetry):

The book presents fundamental concepts about how poetic theory developed through time while it also explores related subjects. Iḥsān ‘Abbās worked to create a system which would enable readers to understand poetry better while they developed their ability to evaluate literary works. The author established this book through his reading efforts which he performed during different historical periods before he developed a system to organize his findings. (Ihsan 1955, p3)

B. Fann al-Sīra (The Art of Biography):

The book which Iḥsān ‘Abbās published in 1956 stands as one of his most important works because it shows his modern writing style. The book presents a detailed examination of biographical literature which traces its evolution through Arabic works while it studies the differences between Arabic and Western literary forms.

C. Ittijāhāt al-Shi‘r al-‘Arabī al-Mu‘āṣir (Trends in Contemporary Arabic Poetry):

The author published this work in 1978 to study how modern Arabic poetry changed through time while showing the artistic and mental choices which poets made. The book serves as a vital resource for readers who want to analyze modern Arabic poetry through its straightforward method of explanation and examination.

2.3.2 Critical Modernity:

A. The History of Andalusian Literature:

The Age of the Taifa Kingdoms and the Almoravids: This work comprises a study of the literary phenomenon during the period of the Taifa rulers and the Almoravid state. The research intends to prove how Andalusian writers developed their writing styles during this particular point in time. The

author studies literary works through two different approaches which focus on their structural components and their content and message.

C. Arabic Poetry in the Diaspora:

The research work studies the poetry of North American Arab poets who immigrated to the United States because their poetry represents the most influential school in contemporary Arabic poetry. The research method depends on induction and inference because it studies specific texts from within to establish universal rules. (Ihsan,1982)

D. *The Shepherd's Exile*:

This work is an autobiography in three volumes in which the author chronicles the course of his life, including its events, personalities, and positions held. He begins with his childhood in a rural village and continues through to his later years.

3. Conclusion:

Following this overview of the development of the literary vision from traditionalism to modernity, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- Ahmad was influenced by the traditional Islamic heritage; however, he soon moved beyond conventional reception toward a reformist critique of that heritage. He interpreted tradition through a rational lens, distancing it from stagnation, while emphasizing its ethical and social dimensions and enabling readers to comprehend it within its historical and cultural context.
- Jurji Zaydan concentrated on the history of Arabic literature, applying a rigorous historical methodology derived from Western scholarship, while correcting inherited inaccuracies. He also disseminated knowledge in a simplified style accessible to the contemporary Arab reader.
- Taha Hussein combined Cartesian skepticism with a lucid stylistic approach. He focused on refining the language of literature so that it might become clearer, more aesthetically refined, and more dynamic. He accorded significant value to artistic creativity in the novel, the short story, and the essay, moving beyond the confines of classical rhetoric and opening the way for a freer and more audacious critical engagement with heritage.
- Ihsan Abbas adopted an encyclopedic historical methodology to connect heritage with contemporaneity. He also emphasized the development of modern poetry and advanced critical analysis beyond mere description toward a deeper understanding of the literary phenomenon.

4. List of references:

A – Books

- 1- Abbas, I. (1955). *The Art of Poetry*. Beirut
- 2- Abbas, I. (1982). *Arabic Poetry in the Diaspora* (1st ed.). Egypt
- 3- al-Aqqad, A. (1981). *Ahmad Amin: His Life and Literature* (1st ed.). Sidon and Beirut
- 4- al-Hasani, F. H. J. (2009). *Taha Hussein's Thought in Light of Islamic Creed* (1st ed.). Saudi Arabia
- 5- Amin, A. (2012). *The Mahdi and Mahdism* (1st ed.). Cairo
- 6- Amin, A. (2013). *Dictionary of Egyptian Customs, Traditions, and Expressions* (1st ed.). Cairo. Amin, A. (2014). *Harun al-Rashid* (1st ed.). Cairo
- 7- Amin, A. (2014). *The Day of Islam* (1st ed.). Cairo. Amin, A. (2017). *The East and the West* (1st ed.). Cairo.
- 8- Amin, A. (2018). *Brigandage and Chivalry in Islam* (1st ed.). Cairo. Amin, A. (n.d.). *My Life*. Cairo.

- 9- Atiya, S. (1954). Taha Hussein and His Literary Battles (Vol. 1, 1st ed.). Cairo. Bayyumi, M. R. (2001). Ahmad Amin: Historian of Islamic Thought (1st ed.). Damascus. Hasan, M. A. (n.d.). Jurji Zaydan. Cairo.
- 10- Hussein, T. (2012). On Pre-Islamic Literature (1st ed.). Cairo. Hussein, T. (2014). The Future of Culture in Egypt. Cairo.
- 11- Hussein, T. (n.d.). Criticism and Reform. Cairo.

B – Theses

- 1- Issa, H. (2016). Literary Discourse in Arab Heritage between the Technique of Communication and the Mechanism of Reception [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oran].
- 2- Shanufi, M. (2006). The Development of Methodological Criticism in Taha Hussein [Doctoral dissertation, University of Algiers].

C – Journal Articles

- 1- al-Abd al-Karim, A. A. (1430 AH). Intergeneric Intertextuality in Fayd al-Khatir by Ahmad Amin (d. 1373 AH). Journal of Imam University, (2).
- 2- Idarat Nabd al-Arab. (n.d.). Literary Criticism According to Taha Hussein: Major Issues and Analyses. Idarat Nabd al-Arab.
- 3- Musa, T. N. (2025). Ahmad Amin: The Architect of the Modern Arab Mind and a Bridge between Heritage and Modernity. Afkar al-Thaqafa wa al-Adab.
- 4- Qasim, R. Z. (n.d.). Taha Hussein: Pioneer of Renewal in the Study of Classical Arabic Literature. Al-Arabi, (659).

D – Seminar Papers

- 1- Abd al-Malik, Q. (n.d.). Sources of the Arabic Language and Literature [Seminar presentation]. University Center of Nour al-Bashir, al-Bayadh.

E – Online Materials

- 1- Idarat Nabd al-Arab. (n.d.). Literary Criticism According to Taha Hussein: Major Issues and Analyses. Retrieved from <http://nabdalarab.com>
- 2- Musa, T. N. (2025). Ahmad Amin: The Architect of the Modern Arab Mind and a Bridge between Heritage and Modernity. Retrieved from <http://sahkfa.blogspot.co>
- 3- Qasim, R. Z. (n.d.). Taha Hussein: Pioneer of Renewal in the Study of Classical Arabic Literature. Retrieved from <http://alarabi.nccal.gov.kw>