

Artificial Intelligence as a New Literary Critic: Reimagining Textual Analysis in English Literature

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Abstract— Artificial Intelligence (AI) has recently started to permeate various fields of study, English literature being one of them. Usually, the approach of literary criticism has been based on human interpretation, theoretical approaches and the close reading. Nevertheless, AI tools like text-mining software, natural language processing, and machine learning models have provided new means through which the analysis of literary texts can be done. This paper will have a discussion on the Artificial Intelligence as a contemporary literary critic and how it is transforming the analysis of text in English literature. It addresses both the opportunities, restrictions, and ethical issues of applying AI in the field of literary research and makes it a point to express that the issue should be approached with a balance between the human creativity and technology, efficiency.

Index Terms— Artificial Intelligence, Literary Criticism, Textual Analysis, English Literature, Digital Humanities.

I. INTRODUCTION

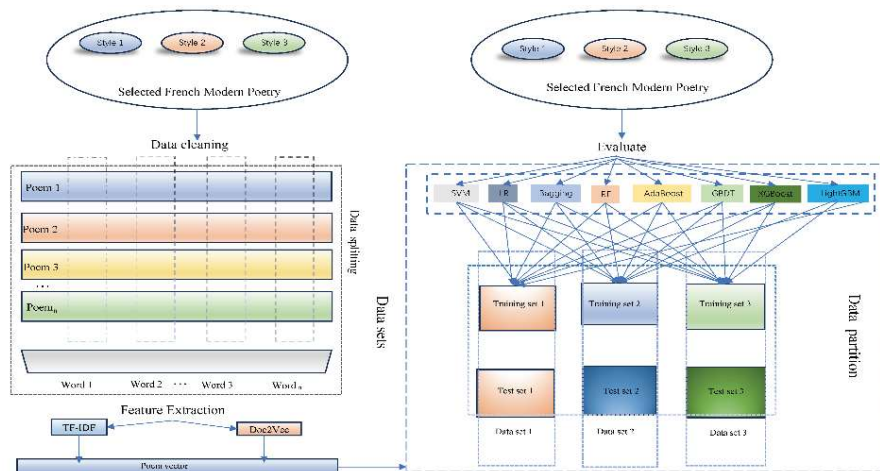


Fig 1

The English literature study has always been focused on the literary criticism. It assists the reader to perceive the texts more profoundly than the superficial meaning through examining the texts in themes, language, structure, historical context, and intent of the author. The range of textual interpretation has been widened over time to include formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, Marxism, and postcolonial theory. Nowadays, another force is introduced, a new trend, Artificial Intelligence (AI). There has been the emergence of the influence of digital tools and computational approaches on reading, analyzing and interpreting literary works.

Artificial Intelligence can be described as artificially designed computer structures/systems that mimic practices that should be handled by the intelligence of human beings to accomplish, which include language comprehension, pattern identification, and decision-making. AI is primarily employed in a literary study in the form of Natural Language Processing (NLP), machine learning, and text-mining. Such technologies enable researchers to study huge amounts of literature databases effectively and indicate the commonality in patterns, as well as discover latent relationships within and between texts. Thereby, AI has brought about a new meaning of criticism, which goes beyond the old concept of close reading to incorporate data-based and large-scale analysis.

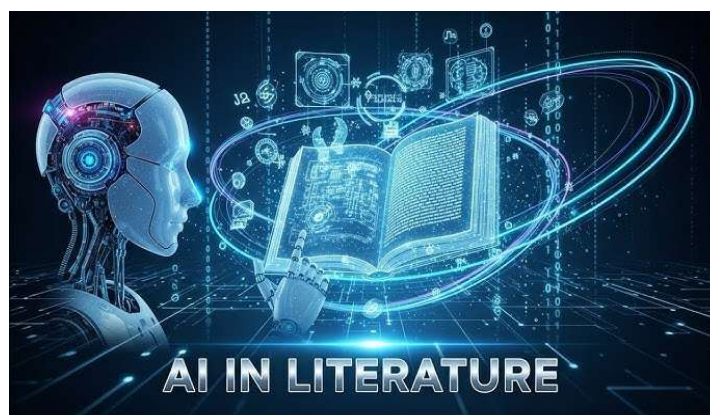


Fig 2

The application of AI to the English literature is also inextricably bound to the concept of digital humanities as a combination of the research in humanities and the use of computational methods. According to scholars of digital humanities, AI poses no threat to the importance of human interpretation instead, it reinforces it by introducing new perspectives. As an example, AI is able to compare the frequency of words, the structure of sentences, the emotional tone, and the pattern of narratives in a way that would otherwise be the hardest uses of the manual reading. The analysis has assisted critics in reviewing and reevaluating the conventional assumptions in literature and analysing texts through different analytical perspectives.

Nevertheless, the concept of Artificial Intelligence as a literary critic has also become a subject of major discussions. The question arising among the critics is whether machines have the capacity to comprehend the meaning, the symbolism, the historical cultural background, or the sensitivity of the literature. The world of literature is highly entrenched in human experience, imagination, and emotionality of human experience: some of these characteristics AI cannot fully mimic. Although AI is capable of detecting linguistic patterns, it is not a conscious being, moral, and subjective. Hence, its application within literature criticism is semiotic and inclusive in nature instead of being interpretative in the traditional context.

Nevertheless, AI has not stopped bearing significant effects in the literary studies. It aids comparative research in genres, periods, and authors, aids in the attribution of authorships, and supports the research regarding narrative structures and the development of themes. With the ever-growing contact of English literature with technology, the question of AI as a novel literary critic is a promising field of scholarly research. The paper is a study of the way that Artificial Intelligence is redefining textual analysis in English literature without downplaying the role of human insight as far as text interpretation is concerned.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing interdependence of literature and digital technology has brought about emergence of new forms of criticism in English literature studies. Digital humanities, literary theory and artificial intelligence scholars have done so by looking at how textual analysis, interpretation and literary history are being transformed by

computational tools. The review presented below examines some of the main works that underlie the theoretical and methodological basis of the current study.

Bode (2018) discusses how digital collections can influence the research of the literary history. In the arguments presented by the author, the digitization has united the accessibility to literary texts and also extended the field of literary research beyond the traditional canons. With the help of massive digital collections, researchers can understand what changed throughout history in terms of the patterns of publication, the development of the genre, and its presentation. Although depiction of the contemporary portrayal of the literary history shifts to its more inclusive and data-driven character, Bode stresses that the computational analysis transforms the process of its production. This article is important in interpreting the role of AI-assisted technology in massive literary criticism.

Jockers (2013) also brings the idea of macroanalysis that utilizes statistical and computational methods to the field of literary studies. He shows that it is possible to analyze themes, narrative form, and style of thousands of works using digital means. According to Jockers, macroanalysis is not used as a substitute of close reading, but it supplements it by offering quantitative data to verify the interpretation of the literature. His work brings out the possibility of using AI to help literary critics to trace trends that are not readily identifiable using conventional means.

McCarty (2005) offers a background argument on the topic of humanities computing and its contribution to literary research. He considers computational tools to be experimentation models which can assist scholars to pose new questions on the texts. According to McCarty, computers are to be employed as the tools of interpretation and not as tools of criticism. His work holds significance in the conception of Artificial Intelligence working as an intellectual ally that supports the critical thinking of humans and does not take its place.

Moretti (2013) introduces the popular idea of distant reading and adjusts the literary critical approach, where a critical analysis is conducted one text at a time, to the analysis of large literary systems. Moretti believes that distant reading can enable researchers to study the genre formation, narrative, and literary development on a larger scale. It is the primary solution to AI-based literary criticism since it is based on computational procedures aimed at analyzing massive textual data and discovering structural patterns in literature.

Underwood (2019) pays attention to the use of digital evidence to examine the long-term literary change. He shows that through computational analysis, it is possible to identify subtle changes in language, style, and *tempus* upon which the focus of language was made at the time, among the historical periods. Underwood stresses that statistical analysis should be accompanied by human interpretation in order to get meaningful literary insights. This is backed up in his work when tasks are carried out in a responsible way; AI reinforces methodological rigor both in the study of literature and across the disciplines.

Van Dijk (2008) focuses on the connection between language and power highlighting the fact that language is a representation of social organization and ideological penetration. Even though his work is based on critical discourse analysis but not on AI, it is a significant theoretical model of textual analysis using AI. Power relations, ideological patterns, and dominant discourses in literature texts can be identified with the help of the computational tools, and then the ideas by Van Dijk can be applied to the field of digital space.

Berry (2012) deals with the idea of digital humanities based on the conceptual underlining of the developed idea and the challenge to the research of the traditional humanities. He claims that the digital approach fosters an interdisciplinary method and a methodological creativity. As Berry points out, humanistic inquiry is not reduced by computational tools which only increase possibilities in such a manner. This point of view helps to justify the opinion that Artificial Intelligence brings new essential practices into the literary studies.

The article by Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth (2016) provides an extensive description of digital humanities practices and methods. Their edited book is an array of methods of using computational means of literary analysis, textual editing, and cultural studies. The article focuses on the cooperation of technologists and humanities and confirms the validity of digital and AI-enhanced literature criticism as a part of academic research.

Bolanos et al. (2024) are more specific, as they focus on the potential of Artificial Intelligence when conducting a literature review. They avoid only covering the opportunities and challenges of AI-driven research, such as efficiency, accuracy, and the issue of ethics. Their paper shows how artificial intelligence might help researchers to extract academic information in large amounts and warn about relying on software extensive usage. The work is especially pertinent in terms of grasping the capabilities of AI in terms of its analysis and shortcomings.

Khan, Shabir, and Abdullah (2025) are interested in the impact of the Artificial Intelligence on the creation and criticism of literature. According to them, AI is affecting the works of literature, both in creation and through interpretation, by bringing new forms of analysis and authorship. Their work indicates controversy in terms of

creativity and originality in work related to AI-assisted criticism and the use of human judgment. This is a work that can be directly related in the current study of AI as a new literary critic.

Altogether, the literature overview shows that English literary studies are changing under the influence of Artificial Intelligence and digital approaches and obtain wider analytical perspectives, offering new research practices. Meanwhile, researchers also stress the importance of human interpretation, sense of ethics, and critical thinking everywhere. All these studies offer a solid bedrock of scrutinizing AI as a novel literary critic in modern English literature.

A. Objectives of the Research Work

- To examine the role of Artificial Intelligence in modern literary criticism
- To understand how AI redefines traditional methods of textual analysis
- To analyze the benefits and limitations of AI in English literary studies
- To explore the future possibilities of AI-assisted literary criticism

TABLE I: ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LITERARY ANALYSIS

Aspect	Description
Text Processing	AI can analyze large volumes of literary texts quickly and efficiently.
Pattern Identification	It identifies recurring themes, motifs, keywords, and narrative structures.
Stylistic Analysis	AI examines sentence length, word frequency, tone, and writing style.
Comparative Study	It helps compare texts across authors, genres, and literary periods.

TABLE II: ADVANTAGES OF AI AS A LITERARY CRITIC

Advantage	Explanation
Speed and Accuracy	AI processes texts faster than manual reading with consistent results.
Objectivity	Analysis is based on data, reducing personal bias in interpretation.
Large-Scale Analysis	Useful for distant reading and corpus-based literary studies.
Research Support	Assists scholars in gaining new insights and confirming hypotheses.

TABLE III: LIMITATIONS AND CRITICAL CONCERNS OF AI IN LITERARY STUDIES

Limitation	Explanation
Lack of Emotional Understanding	AI cannot fully grasp emotions, symbolism, or aesthetic value.
Absence of Cultural Context	It struggles to interpret historical and cultural meanings.
Dependence Risk	Overuse may reduce human creativity and critical thinking.
Supportive Role	AI complements human critics but cannot replace them.

III. CONCLUSION

This piece of research concludes that Artificial Intelligence has become a beneficial and new technology in the realm of English literary criticism. Using the technologies of Natural Language Processing and machine learning, AI will redesign the classical textual analysis in terms of speed, accuracy, and scale in the analysis of literary works. It helps researchers to spot trends, themes and stylistic peculiarities that might be unnoticed by using traditional reading techniques.

Nonetheless, the research also proves that Artificial Intelligence will not substitute literary critics of people. Literature is closely related to human feelings, societies, historical background, and fictional areas of expression in which AI will not be able to excel. Although AI is good at processing linguistic data, it is not emotionally sensitive, interpretative, and aesthetically judgmental.

That is why the combination of the Artificial Intelligence and human knowledge is the best way of literary criticism. Implemented in a non-malicious manner, AI can be seen as cooperative literary critic, which causes no harm and increases research quality and opportunities to analyze it. Such a combination between technology and human creativeness creates new paths to be pursued in the academic study of literature as well as makes sure that English literature is also studied meaningfully in the digital age.

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