Introduction
Literary criticism refers to the literary works and other concerning issues which are actually taken into consideration. It applies, as a term, to any argumentation about literature, whether or not specific works are analyzed. Plato’s cautions against the risky consequence of poetic inspiration in general in his Republic are thus often taken as the earliest important example of literary criticism. Criticism in this narrow sense can be distinguished not only from aesthetics (the philosophy of artistic value) but also from other matters that may concern the student of literature: biographical questions, bibliography, historical knowledge, sources and influences, and problems of method.

After a brief general survey of Persian prose and poetry, the modern period has been opened with the study of the early Qajar and pre-constitutional period. At that time modernizing influences first began to manifest themselves in Persian life and letters. With the influences of the west was the advent of new political factors and an increased social consciousness, with a rising middle class of educated persons, all of which had a profound effect on the Persian’ attitude towards literature. On the other hand, increased social consciousness resulted in literature being used and this use of literature was not new in Iran, though the forms employed were as a weapon of social criticism. Further, a new type of reading public demanded a new type of literature which contained, among other things, reflections of foreign cultures and scientific progress. Hence the spread of newspapers and the beginning of extensive translations of foreign works.

Literary development of the Twentieth Century was the outcome of the national awakening in Iran. The knowledge of European language and Literature, Western education, Modern Technology, Natural science and the social sciences and its reflection on everyday life deeply influenced the Iranian way of thinking and brought a drastic turn in the Political, Social and economic development of the people of Iran. In addition to this, the Journalism and intelligentsia also exercised a very important role. It can be
realized by the fact that in 1907 A.D. alone about eighty four newspapers and periodicals were founded. These newspapers and periodicals were often representatives of different democratic and political ideals and some of them were widely read by the educated and political minded People. The Journals Bahar(1910) Danishkadeh(1918) and Sukhan (1943) published articles on poetry and translations from European and other foreign poets which helped in moulding literary opinions. The Persian newspapers and journals thus provided the most effective means for the propagation of political ideas and quickening the tempo of modernization.


Afterwards, several themes are common among the new literary critics. Realism, or "social critical realism"; critics discouraged imaginative or fanciful works and urged the production of literature which reflected real life. Patriotism; critics appealed for the establishment of a strong national literature which would inspire patriotism in Iranians. Patriotism was considered a moral virtue and critics saw Iran's troubles grandly as the result of the decline in moral values. "Protest"; by this term what is meant is the graphic, vitriolic language used by these critics in their attacks. In this sense the modern critics really continue the classical critical tradition, if it could be so called, based on slandering rivals. Simplicity, that is, "rejection of affectation and abstruseness of language"; critics encouraged simple, clear prose and verse styles.

For this generation of thinkers, Iranian backwardness was the result of its culture's decay. They sought to place attention on the shortcomings
of Iran's literature, because they thought that by revitalizing it they could lay the ground for the revitalization of their society. "Such an approach, of course, ignores the fact that illiteracy and ignorance are the outward manifestations of a poor, backward, medieval economy."

Considered the "founder of modern literary criticism in Iran," Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadah used literary criticism as "the vehicle for his reformist impulse." Akhundzadah, because of his unfamiliarity with the Persian language and its prosody, made technical errors in some of his criticism, and was just as verbose and unclear as those he attacked. However, he was the first critic in the modern tradition. He emphasized "realistic content in prose and poetry" and attacked the "decadence of Persian literature — a literature that failed to address the social needs of its time.

Saeed Nafisi analyzed and edited several critical works. He is well known for his works on Rudaki and Sufi literature. Parviz Natel-Khanlari and Gholamhossein Yousefi, who belong to Nafisi's generation, were also involved in modern literature and critical writings. Natel-Khanlari is distinguished by the simplicity of his style. He did not follow the traditionalists, nor did he advocate the new. Instead, his approach accommodated the entire spectrum of creativity and expression in Persian literature.

Contemporary Persian literary criticism reached its maturity after Sadeq Hedayat, Ebrahim Golestan, Houshang Golshiri, Abdolhossein Zarrinkoub and Shahrokh Meskoob. Among these figures, Zarrinkoub held academic positions and had a reputation not only among the intelligentsia but also in academia. Besides his significant contribution to the maturity of Persian language and literature, Zarrinkoub boosted comparative literature and Persian literary criticism. Zarrinkoub's Serr e Naw is a critical and comparative analysis of Rumi's Masnavi. In turn, Shahrokh Meskoob worked on Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, using the principles of modern literary criticism.

Mohammad Taghi Bahar's main contribution to this field is his book called Sabk Shenasi (Stylistics). It is a pioneering work on the practice of Persian literary historiography and the emergence and development of
Persian literature as a distinct institution in the early part of the twentieth century. It contends that the exemplary status of Sabk-shinasi rests on the recognition of its disciplinary or institutional achievements. It further contends that, rather than a text on Persian ‘stylistics’, Sabk-shinasi is a vast history of Persian literary prose, and, as such, is a significant intervention in Persian literary historiography.