

* HORACE [65-8 BC]

* INTRODUCTION:

Horace is the most significant critic of the Roman classicist. He lived in the glorious Augustan age named after Octavius Augustus. To this age belong some of the greatest Roman writers like Virgil, Ovid and Livy. There were two schools of writing in Horace's day: the Old Latin and the Modern Alexandrian. His criticism, therefore, follows the Greek model in general and Aristotle, in particular.

* HIS WORKS:

His works include "two books of Satires", "four books of Odes" and "three books of epistles" the last of which the "Epistle to the Pisos", is generally called the "ARS POETICA" [art of poetry]. It is a letter in verse - offering advice on literary matters.

The subject-matter of his work falls into three well-marked divisions.

* First, there is **poesis**, the discussion of the subject matter of the poetry.

* Secondly, there is **poema**, the form of poetry, which includes drama also.

* Thirdly, there is **poeta**, 'the poet' which carries advice to the poet regarding his art and examines the functions of the poet.

Horace's discussion of poetry includes its nature, **subject-matter, kinds, function and language.**

* FIRST PART OF HIS ART OF POETRY:

Horace makes two observations regarding the subject matter of poetry, which constitutes the first part of his art of poetry. He says, "**let your theme be what it may, provided it be simple and uniform**", and "**choose a theme suited to your powers, ye authors and ponder long what weight your shoulders refuse to bear and what they can support**".

He says, "He (poet) who chooses his subject wisely will find that **neither words nor lucid arrangement fail him**".

* SECOND PART OF HIS ART OF POETRY:

In the second part, Horace discusses the forms and kinds of poetry. For the epic, which celebrates

the exploits of princes and leaders and the sad story of war, Horace considers the **dactylic hexameter** as the **rightful metre**; for the mournful **elegy** and **songs of thanksgiving**, the elegiac measure [a couplet, whose first line uses **dactylic hexameter** and second a **dactylic pentameter**]; for comedy, tragedy and satirical verse, the **iambic metre** which has a conversational ease; for **lyrics, hymns on gods, songs of love or victory**, the **various lyrical measures**.

*FUNCTION OF POETRY:

According to Horace, "poets desire either to improve or to please, or to unite the agreeable or the profitable and at once **delight and instruct the reader**." Horace is of the view that "**the nature and property**" of poetry is "**to charm the mind**". So, according to Horace, poetry serves a **dual function - instruction and delight**.

*LANGUAGE OF POETRY:

According to Horace, a poet is free to use **both familiar words and new**, if they fulfil the two requirements of expression **clarity and effectiveness**. The poet's skill lies in making the **familiar words appear strange and the strange ones familiar**. Horace is of the view that a great artist should be **naturally gifted**, though training is equally important.

* DISCUSSION ON DRAMA:

Horace's discussion on drama falls under three divisions: **Plot**, **Character** and **style**. The story of the plot may be borrowed from familiar material, preferably from the known **Greek legends**. There should be harmony in the plot, harmony among the **beginning**, **the middle** and **the end**. Horace recommends that shocking events like a **mother killing the child**, should be avoided. As far as the **chorus is concerned**, Horace feels that chorus should be an **integral part of the plot** and should not disturb the unity of action.

Horace's views on the length of the play seem to be original because **neither Aristotle nor Greek literary practice** reveals this concept. A play should be "**neither shorter nor longer than five acts, or it will never win favour and be asked for again**". It is difficult to establish how Horace arrived at this concept of five acts though it has become the practice.

* CHARACTERIZATION:

Horace prefers the dramatist to draw on the **ancient Greek legends**. If characters are invented, they must be **true to life**.

* SATIRE:

His discussion on the satire occurs mostly in his criticism of **Lucilius** in **BOOK I** of the satires. He lists the qualities needed for a satirist:

* wit or the intellectual gift to please in an unexpected way.

* the faculty to see fun of things.

* vigour or the power to hit hard.

* sincerity of expression, reflecting the man in the author.

* QUINTILIAN [35AD-95AD]

* INTRODUCTION:

Quintilian was also an ardent admirer of the classics. His observations, however, are confined only to the art of speaking. His book, "INSTITUTIO ORATORIA" (The Education of an orator) is a treatise in twelve books, dealing with the essentials of the art of oratory. For the purpose of literary criticism, books 8-10 are significant because in these he formulates a theory of prose style which applies both to writing and the art of speaking.

* PROSE COMPOSITION:

For Quintilian, style

Consists of two things: words and their arrangement. He is in agreement with Aristotle and Horace in believing that every day subjects which only prose treats of need familiar words for effective expression. The language of prose is the language of daily life.

The writer has to be careful in his choice of words. He makes put the apt word at the right place. It is all in the hands of the skilful artist to use them effectively. The use of choice words provides clarity and serves as an ornamental grace to the artistic structure. Like the choice of words, the combination of phrases, clauses and sentences, also play a vital role in achieving clarity and ornamental grace.

* ORNAMENTATION OF STYLE:

The devices he refers to are metaphors and figure of speech. For Quintilian, the total effect of these devices is that of novelty, variety, elegance and clarity along with emotional pleasure.

Quintilian had the advantage of comparing two languages Greek and Latin. He was perhaps, the first to introduce comparative criticism anticipating DRYDEN.

* LONGINIUS:

* INTRODUCTION:

The identity of Longinus is not known. However the book "ON THE SUBLIME" more familiarly called Longinus "ON THE SUBLIME" is attributed to Cassius Longinus of Palmyra, a Greek rhetorician. "ON THE SUBLIME" is a careful inquiry into the elements of style and structure that produce sublimity. When constitutes sublimity in literature is its central theme. Longinus shows a radically different approach from Plato and Aristotle. He is highly innovative.

* SUBLIMITY:

'Sublime' means 'height' or 'elevation'. "SUBLIMITY", he says, "consists in a certain distinction and consummate excellence in expression, and it is from this and no other source, that the greatest poets and prose writers have gained their eminence and immortal fame. The effect of a lofty passage is not to convince the reason of a reader but to transport him out of himself. Invariably an admirable speech casts a spell over us and eclipses that which merely aims at persuasion and pleasure".

* FIVE PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF THE SUBLIME:

Longinus finds five principal sources of the sublime, the first three being largely the gifts of nature and the remaining two, the gifts of art:

- * Grandeur of thought.
- * Capacity for strong emotion.
- * Appropriate use of figures.
- * Nobility of diction
- * Dignity of composition or a happy synthesis of all preceding gifts.

* GRANDEUR OF THOUGHT:

According to Longinus sublimity is the echo of greatness of soul. It is impossible for those whose whole lives are full of mean and servile ideas and habits, to produce anything that is admirable and worthy of an immortal life. He says "Emulation will bring those great examples before our eyes [Homer, Plato etc.] illuminating our path and lighting up our souls to the high standard or perfection, imaged on our minds".

* CAPACITY OF STRONG EMOTION:

These sublime thoughts of the loftiest soul provide 'true emotion' in 'the right place'. Longinus values them primarily for the aesthetic transport they cause, though this transport may ultimately be found to be morally uplifting.

* FIGURES OF SPEECH:

Longinus stresses the importance of appropriate use of figures in producing sublimity in literature. According to him, a figure is effective only when it appears in disguise, when it is shaded by brilliance of style. He wants to introduce an element of strangeness into what one speaks or hears everyday, because they appeal to the basic demand of human nature that of pleasant surprise. To achieve this figures are used. The chief figures for the production of sublimity, according to Longinus, are the rhetorical questions: **asyndeton** [absence of conjunction between clauses]: **hyperbaton** [inversion]: **periphrasis** [round about way of saying something].

* NOBILITY OF DICTION:

Longinus is convinced that the proper choice of words and use of **metaphors** produce **sublimity**. According to him, the proper use of words will have "a **moving and seductive effect**". It makes even the trivial appear grand.

* DIGNITY OF COMPOSITION:

The dignity of composition is achieved through the arrangement of words. The arrangement should blend thought, emotion figures and words into a harmonious whole. Such an arrangement, according to him, has not only "a natural power of persuasion and of giving pleasure, the soul and swaying the heart of men". Longinus has struck a new dimension in literary criticism.