

Lecture Series on Contemporary Theories: Introduction Lecture 2

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Some Early Thinkers

- After Plato and Aristotle, two names to reckon with in the area of Literary Criticism are Longinus and Horace
- Longinus and Horace are Roman thinkers
- They flourished between 1st century BCE and 1st century CE

Longinus

- Longinus' *On the Sublime* is a masterpiece of Literary Criticism.
- Longinus writes that literature has the ability to “transport.”
- According to Longinus, a creative writer needs both spur and check for creative output.

Longinus

- Further, creativity is both innate and acquired.
- Longinus critically applauds and condemns certain literary works as examples of good or bad styles of writing. Longinus ultimately promotes an “elevation of style” and an essence of “simplicity.” To quote this famous author, “the first and most important source of sublimity [is] the power of forming great conceptions.”

Longinus

- The concept of the sublime is generally accepted to refer to a style of writing that elevates itself “above the ordinary.”
- Finally, Longinus sets out five sources of sublimity: “great thoughts, strong emotions, certain figures of thought and speech, noble diction, and dignified word arrangement.”

Horace

- “Ars Poetica,” or “The Art of Poetry,” is a poem written by Horace in 19 BC, in which he advises poets on the art of writing poetry and drama.
- A poem demands unity, to be secured by harmony and proportion, as well as a wise choice of subject and good diction. Meter and style must be appropriate to theme and to character. A good model will always be found in Homer (ll, 1–152).

Horace

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- Dramatic poetry calls for special care – as to character drawing, propriety of representation, length of a play, number of actors, use of the chorus and its music, special features for the satyric type, verse-forms, and employment of Greek models (ll. 153–294).
 - A poet's qualifications include common sense, knowledge of character, adherence to high ideals, combination of the dulce with the utile, intellectual superiority, appreciation of the noble history and lofty mission of poetry, and above all a willingness to listen to and profit by impartial criticism (ll. 295–476).
 - (Some of the content has been taken from open sources on Internet)