

## **Horace: Ars Poetica**

Ars Poetica or the Art of Poetry is a work which equaled Aristotle's Poetics in its influence during the Renaissance. The title Ars Poetica means a treatise on the art of writing poetry, but it is so lacking in form and system. Sealiger called it, "an art of poetry written without art". In fact, it is not regular treatise, but an epistle or verse letter to his young friend, Pisos.

The subject-matter clearly falls into three well-marked divisions. First, there is Poesis, or the discussion of the subject matter of poetry. A poem must have organic unity and the poet must wise enough in the use and choice of words. He adds, "As the woods change their leaves at the year's decline, and the first leaves fall first, so words perish with old age and another newly born, thrive and flourish like youth". Thus, in his view, the language of poetry should be different from the language of common man because the essence of art lies in the creation of beauty. Further in his view meter allotted by the ancient Greeks must be followed by every poet. For epic poetry, they used the iambic hexameter, for poems of complaint, elegiac verse, for tragedy or comedy, iambic verse and for hymns to the Gods, odes to victory and love poems measures of a lyrical kind.

Secondly, there is poem or forms, Horace consider drama as a form of poetry lyrical or epic, in which, plot should be based on old familiar stories and novelty

may be imparted by skillful treatment. In characterization, the poet must be true to type characters must be consistent. The dramatic style must also vary in accordance with character, mood and circumstance. A play should not have more or less than five Acts. There must not be more three characters in any one scene. The chorus should form an integral part of the play. The meter in which a long syllable is preceded by a short one is called Iambic meter. The syllables should be arranged in groups of six spondees may be occasionally used for a change. Horace considers that both tragedy and comedy are Greek inventions. So the shortcomings of the Greek stage, and the nature of a satyr-play, are described in detail.

The third part is Poet or the poet regarding art and functions of poetry. A poet must be keen observer of men and manners and “language true of life” in which nobility and dignity of soul are necessary. The poet should try to avoid faults as much as he can. Great poets have been great prophets. In respect of Imitation, Horace says that poet must seek their models in nature, life and manners and must remain true to nature even when they indulge their fancy and write stories and fictions.