ARISTOTLE’S *POETICS*:
335-322 BCE

Imitation is natural to man from childhood

6 Parts of a Tragedy:  1.  Plot or Fable
    2.  Characters
    3.  Diction
    4.  Thought
    5.  Melody
    6.  Spectacle

**Tragedy**

“Is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form, with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions.”

**Comedy**

“An imitation of men worse than average; worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular thing, the Ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly. The Ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or the deformity not productive of pain or harm to others.”

**Plot**

the combination of the incidents or things done in the story
the end & purpose of tragedy
has a beginning, middle, and end

Unity of plot does not consist in its having one man as its subject
as an imitation of action it must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of anyone of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole

**Unity of Time**

“Tragedy endeavors to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun or something near that”

**Character**

4 points to aim at:
  1.  they shall be good
  2.  appropriate
  3.  make them like the reality
  4.  consistent and the same throughout
Poetry is more philosophic and of graver import than history since its statements are of the nature rather than of universals, whereas those of history are singular.

HORACE’S *ARS POETICA*:
Abt 20 BCE
Also called *Epistle to the Pisones*
Consists largely of maxims extracted from Greeks
Some topics:

- poet should study life & human relations
- avoid corrupting influences of gain & flattery
- not write unless inspired by the Muse
- submit his work to a competent judge
- keep it w/o publication for 9 years

Poets aim either to help or to amuse the reader or to say what is pleasant and at the same time what is suitable

The writer who has combined the pleasant wit the useful (*miscuit utile dulci*) wins on all points by delighting the reader while he gives advice

LONGINUS’ *On the Sublime* (*Peri Hapssas*)
Appears to belong to the 1st or 2nd cent. CE
Is not mentioned in antiquity
Republished by Robortelli in 1554
but after Boileau’s translation (1674) it gets noticed
Treatise on what constitutes sublimity in literature
Analyzes the qualities of writing that constitute sublimity & finds in them grandeur of ideas & the capacity for strong emotion supplemented by artistic construction & nobility of phrase
Discusses faults to be avoided, the part played by imagination & various figures of speech Illustrates his points by quoting from literature
Adds “enthusiasm” to Aristotle’s logical precepts

5 sources of the sublime:

1. grandeur of thought (the power of forming great conceptions)
2. vehement & inspired passion
3. figures of speech
4. noble phrasing or diction (choice of proper & inspiring words)
5. elevation in arrangement of words