

Expression of emotion through language, A Roman perspective

Kamani Jayasekera

Department of Western Classical Culture, University of Kelaniya

ABSTRACT

From its early beginnings the Western classical world had recognized the power literature has in expressing human emotions. The controversial arguments found in *Plato* and *Aristotle* are mainly founded on the influence of poetry on the human mind and its effect on society. Many held the view that the success of literature depended on the writer's ability to feel the emotion that he was portraying and his effectiveness in transporting these feelings to his reader.

The effect is at times gloriously referred to as a magnetic power irresistible and beyond the control of the reader.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how when it came to the Romans language was manipulated to transport emotions, though the writer may not exactly feel the emotion that he was portraying as the earlier theorists have recommended. How one could by means of practiced and pre meditated skills of language and expression make the reader feel that he was sharing and experiencing the exact emotion felt by the writer.

I hope to analyze the point through reference to the Roman literary theorist *Longinus* (1ST Century AD) and his ideas on the methods of reaching sublimity. As to the use of language in expression I intend to take examples from the Satirist *Juvenal*. (born 55 AD) and the historian *Tacitus* (born 56-57 AD.)

Both the writers express indignation and rightful anger at what they were using as subject matter. But expression and style has been used to heighten the fact that the very emotion they were experiencing had made them side step the rules of art. And it is this very art in nature and nature in art they had adopted, that had made them a success in expression.