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Sub :- M.A (Sem-2, CC-7, Unit-2)

Topic :- Longinus : On The Sublime.

Q1) Discuss Longinus as the first romantic critic.

Ans) The exact date and authorship of the Greek treatise 'On the Sublime' attributed to one Longinus, has been a matter of much critical wrangling. It was in 1554 that the Italian Robertello first presented the work to the modern readers and ascribed it to a rhetorician named Dionysius Longinus, and this authorship was generally accepted upto the beginning of the 19th Century. Later on many new names other authors name is ascribed to it. The controversy still goes on, and who its author actually was still remains uncertain. Therefore, the traditional authorship is retained and the work is simply assigned to one 'Longinus'.

Scott - James calls Longinus, "the first romantic critic" because of his insistence on passion, ecstasy, transport, imagination, intensity and exaltation. These are the romantic traits breathed by Longinus in the aesthetic criticism of the classical

Age. In the words of Prof. Saintsbury also Longinus ~~has if not~~ is very close to the modern romantic criticism itself. Before Longinus the Greek and Roman critics judged a work of ~~art~~ art in accordance with set rules or considered it either from the pragmatic or the ethical standpoint. Longinus dispensed with all these standards. He judged a work more by its essence than by its form. He advanced his theory of sublimity and insisted that the reader or hearer should be, 'Carried away transported and moved to ecstasy by the grandeur and the passion of the work.'

Longinus however ~~to~~ was not a thorough romantic critic, he tempers romanticism with what is sanest in classicism. He knew that emotion and passion should be guided by some rules. Mere grandeur says he is exposed to danger when left without the control of reason and the ballast of scientific method. For the great passion breed the curd as often as the spur. In this way it can be said that he is the first romantic critic who maintained his affiliations with classicism.

Longinus is a romantic critic in some other ways also. He opposed the classical view that not more than two metaphors at a time should be used in a work;

especially because he was gifted with genuine romantic temper.

It is true that the classical qualities of Longinus as a critic are quite obvious.

He shows great reverence for the ancient Greek models for tradition and advocates their imitation. He does not believe that a genius is a law unto himself. He wants to put some curb or restraint on wayward genius. He in fact believes in rules and regulations but he loves the use of refined and cultivated poetic style.

But while this is true, it is true also that ~~he~~^{he} anticipates much that is modern in critical works. And this is shown by his concern with the sense rather than with the form of literature, his understanding of the part played by the imagination and the feelings in work, his effort at interpretation and appreciation, his widening outlook and the variety of his judicial methods, features, which were to reappear only after the lapse of centuries.

In fact the fusion of the romantic, the classical and the modern strains in Longinus is the real key to his greatness, originality and relevance. He has an appeal to the romanticists as well as classicists and also to some extent to the moderns. He was first to assert that "Style is the man."