

## ENGLISH AUTHORSHIP AND THE EARLY MODERN SUBLIME

Patrick Cheney's new book places the sublime at the heart of poems and plays in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. Specifically, Cheney argues for the importance of an 'early modern sublime' to the advent of modern authorship in Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. Chapters feature a model of creative excellence and social liberty that helps explain the greatness of the English Renaissance. Cheney's argument revises the received wisdom, which locates the sublime in the eighteenth-century philosophical 'subject'. The book demonstrates that canonical works such as *The Faerie Queene* and *King Lear* reinvent sublimity as a new standard of authorship. This standard emerges not only in rational, patriotic paradigms of classical and Christian goodness but also in the eternizing greatness of the author's work: free, heightened, ecstatic. Playing a centralizing role in the advent of modern authorship, the early modern sublime becomes a catalyst in the formation of an English canon.

PATRICK CHENEY is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of seven monographs and the editor of eleven collections, as well as the editor of poems by Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. A recipient of the Faculty Scholar Medal from Pennsylvania State University and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Montana, Cheney has been a Visiting Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford, and a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. Currently, he is the general editor of the fourteen-volume *Oxford History of Poetry in English*.

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Frontispiece. Detail from 'An Allegory of Peace and the Arts'. Orazio Gentileschi.  
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*Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson*

PATRICK CHENEY

*Pennsylvania State University*



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*For Jan*

## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Note on Texts and References</i>	xii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction: Authorship and Sublimity <span style="float: right;">I</span>	
1 Citizenship and Godhood: A Historical Aesthetics of the Sublime Image, Longinus to Lyotard	23
2 Spenser's Sublime Career	58
3 Fictions of Transport: Spenser's Heroic Sublime	88
4 Tragedy and Transport: <i>Phantasia</i> in Marlowe's Poems and Plays	129
5 'A world of figures': The Shakespearean Sublime	158
6 The Sublime Wit of Ben Jonson	207
Afterword: 'The Aeonian Mount': Sublimity, Eloquence, Canonicity	252
<i>Works Cited</i>	265
<i>Index</i>	291

## *List of Figures*

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Frontispiece. Detail from ‘An Allegory of Peace and the Arts’.<br>Orazio Gentileschi. Marlborough House, c. 1635–8.<br>Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen<br>Elizabeth II 2017.   | <i>page</i> ii |
| Figure 1. William Marshall, title page to Gerard Langbaine’s<br>edition of Longinus: <i>Dionysiou Longinou rhetoros</i><br><i>Peri hypsous</i> (Oxford, 1636). With permission of the<br>Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC. | xv             |
| Figure 2. Antonie Wierix II, ‘Grammatica’. Antwerp, 1592. With<br>permission of the Rijksmuseum, Netherlands. Hollstein<br>Dutch 2003.  | xvi            |

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*Acknowledgements*

xi

Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 174–87. I am grateful to the editors and publishers for the opportunity to include this material here. I would add that elsewhere I discuss sublime authorship in two additional English Renaissance figures (both mentioned in the Works Cited): Donne (*‘Artes Poeticae’*) and Marston.

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## *Note on Texts and References*

Quotations from Spenser's poetry come from *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Harlow: Pearson Education-Longman, 2001) and *Spenser's Shorter Poetry*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999).

Quotations from Marlowe's plays come from *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett, Everyman Library (London: Dent; Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1999), while quotations from Marlowe's poems come from *The Collected Poems of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Brian J. Striar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Quotations from Shakespeare's poems and plays come from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al., 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2016). For *King Lear*, quotations come from the Norton 'Combined Text', which uses the folio edition as the base text, then interpolates lines from the quarto edition. In one instance, I cite the quarto itself.

Quotations from Jonson come from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Quotations from other Renaissance dramatists come from *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Norton, 2002).

Quotations from Donne come from *John Donne: Collected Poetry*, ed. Ilona Bell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2012), while quotations from Milton come from *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis: Odyssey, 1957).

Quotations from Longinus come from *On Sublimity, Classical Literary Criticism*, ed. D.A. Russell and Michael Winterbottom, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 143–87.

Unless otherwise noted, quotations and translations from other classical authors come from the Loeb Classical Library. As the Works Cited list at the end reveals, major exceptions include Plato's dialogues, which come from the edition of Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns; Aristotle's

*Note on Texts and References*

xiii

works, from the edition of Richard McKeon; and the Bible, from the facsimile of the Geneva edition of 1560 published by the University of Wisconsin Press. (Works merely cited in passing but not quoted in the text do not appear in the Works Cited list.)

Throughout, I modernize the archaic i–j and u–v of Renaissance texts, as well as other obsolete typographical conventions such as the italicizing of names and places.

For formatting, I rely primarily on the ‘works cited’ format from the *MLA Style Manual*; this format depends on a system of abbreviation in the text and the notes, and thus it includes full citations only in the list of Works Cited. In particular, I use the following citation format to refer to a given primary work’s book number, section or chapter number, and page number, such as Longinus’ *On Sublimity*: 1.4: 144 (or sometimes minus the section or chapter number: 10: 105). For secondary works of more than one volume, I use the following format to refer to volume and page number: 2: 205. Secondarily, I accommodate Cambridge University Press’s in-house style guide by using single quotation marks, as well as other formatting conventions, such as for printing dates and page numbers and for spelling.

## *Abbreviations*

<i>CEWBJ</i>	<i>Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>circa</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
esp.	especially
<i>FQ</i>	<i>The Faerie Queene</i>
MS	manuscript
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
rpt.	reprint
qtd.	quoted
pub.	published
s.d.	stage direction
St.	Saint

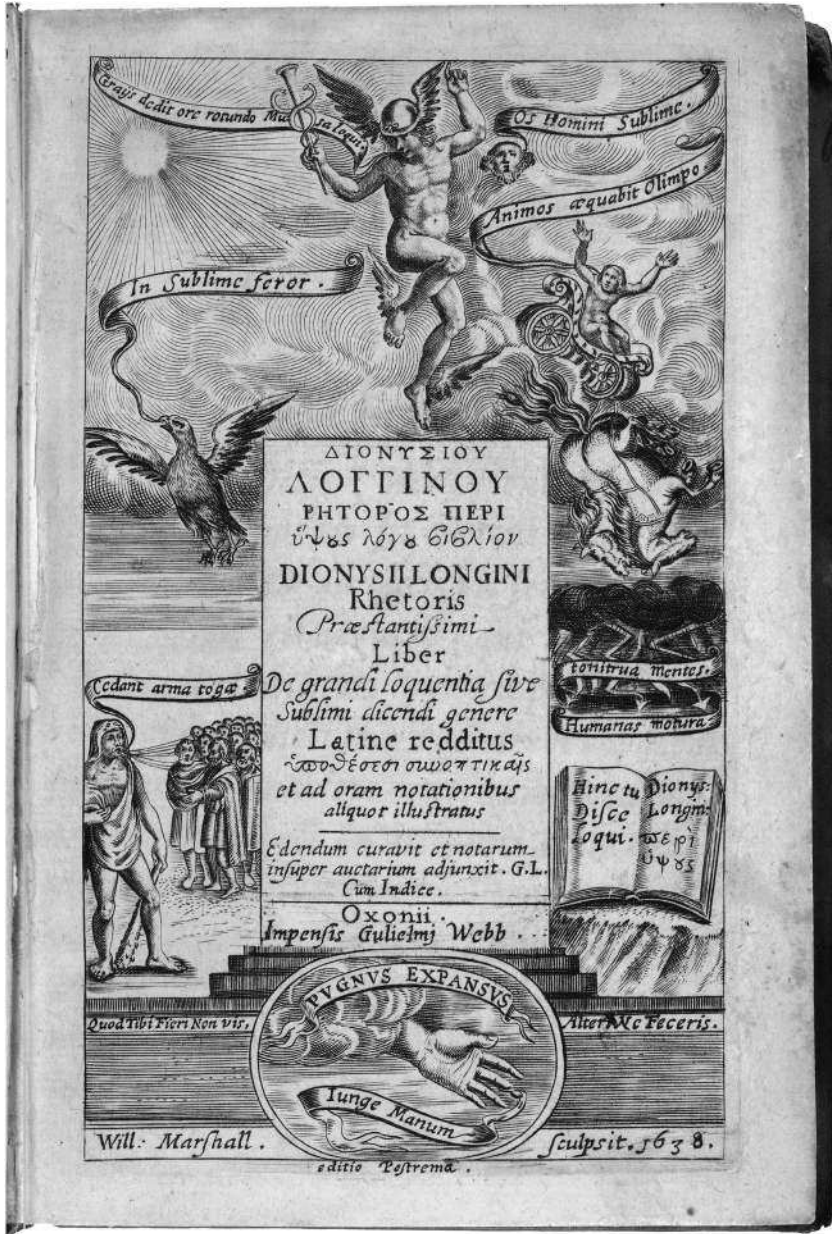


Figure 1. William Marshall, title page to Gerard Langbaine's edition of Longinus: *Dionysiou Longinou rhetoros Peri hypsous* (Oxford, 1636).  
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