

Introduction

Authorship and Sublimity

In this book, I argue for the importance of an ‘early modern sublime’ to the advent of modern English authorship in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In making this argument, I yoke together two topics that literary criticism typically keeps separate: ‘The Author’ and ‘The Sublime’. These are titles to two New Critical Idiom volumes, both published by Routledge in 2005: *The Author*, by Andrew Bennett; and *The Sublime*, by Philip Shaw. While Shaw never refers to the category of ‘the author’ directly, Bennett mentions ‘the sublime’ twice in passing (60, 66), opening up a possibility that I suggest is important to English literary history: the connection between authorship and sublimity is vital to the formation of a modern literary canon.

Bennett and Shaw write their books for the Routledge series because ‘the author’ and ‘the sublime’ constitute two major terms of modern critical theory. An important body of criticism addresses ‘the author’. Bennett goes so far as to write:

The history of literary criticism from the earliest times may in fact be said to be organized around conceptions of the author . . . : the problem of criticism, the problem of reading, *is* in the end the problem of authorship. (4, 112; his emphasis)

In early modern studies, recent criticism has made authorship a major topic, and the same could be said of other periods.¹ Similarly, an

¹ In addition to Barthes and Bloom (to be discussed presently), as well as that other founder of modern authorship studies, Foucault (Bennett 5), see Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*; Orgel, ‘What Is a Text?’, Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship*; Wall, *Imprint of Gender*, ‘Authorship,’ ‘Dramatic Authorship’; Masten; Dobransky; Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*; J. Knapp, *Shakespeare Only*. For my own work on authorship, see *Spenser’s Famous Flight*, *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession*, *Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright*, *Shakespeare’s Literary Authorship*, and *Marlowe’s Republican Authorship*, as well as the ‘Introduction’ to the *Shakespeare Studies* ‘Forum: The Return of the Author’. For a recent foray into ‘Medieval and Early Modern Authorship’ (book title), see Bolens and Erne, which includes essays by such scholars as Helen Cooper, Robert R. Edwards,

important body of criticism addresses the sublime, though it is only recently coming onto our critical radar. In another 2005 book, *Sublimity and Skepticism in Montaigne and Milton*, David L. Sedley calls the sublime ‘the preeminent modern aesthetic category’ (153).

To date, however, no one has charted ‘the early modern sublime’.² Certainly, the sublime has been a major topic of philosophical discourse since the eighteenth century, producing major statements by Burke, Kant, and Coleridge, as well as by Hegel, Schiller, Schelling, Nietzsche, Freud, Adorno, Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, and Žižek (Shaw; Guyer). As Jean-Luc Nancy has put it, ‘there is no contemporary thought of art and its end which does not . . . pay tribute to the thought of the sublime’ (‘Sublime Offering’ 26). Two recent collections are especially important, and signal an expansive professional drive to locate the sublime at the centre of the arts, humanities, social sciences, and even sciences. In 2011, Roald Hoffman and Iain Boyd Whyte edit *Beyond the Finite: The Sublime in Art and Science*, which ‘represents a first attempt to extend the discussion of the sublime into the realm of the natural scientist’ (vii). In 2012, Timothy Costelloe edits *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, which calls for revisionary work in art history, architecture, geography, philosophy, religion, history, and literature: ‘the sublime has insinuated itself into a range of disciplines and has taken on a rich variety of perspectives, and through its various liaisons has undergone a process of change and maturity’ (7). Specifically, Costelloe’s volume shows how ‘the sublime . . . carries the long history of the relationship between human beings and those aspects of their world that excite in them particular emotions, powerful enough to evoke transcendence, shock, awe, and terror’ (2). Even in the field where the sublime is most popularly known, the British Romantic era, scholars are calling for a ‘reevaluation’: ‘We need a more detailed and thorough

Neil Forsyth, Colin Burrow, Rita Copeland, and Alastair Minnis. The editors’ ‘Introduction’ forms an excellent overview (11–27).

² Cf. two specialized studies that turn out to contribute little to the present book; both neglect the historical advent of the sublime, and instead tap into post-structuralist theory – sublimation rather than sublimity; Freud and Lacan, not Longinus; psychoanalysis instead of authorship: Halpern (on Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*); and Cefalu (on metaphysical poets such as Crashaw and Donne). For helping me see that an author like Tasso, in *Gerusalemme liberata*, uses his ‘sublimatory epic’ to convert ‘narcissism’ and ‘sexual instinct’ into ‘collective energy’ – effectively, ‘romance’ into ‘epic’ – with Godfredo the hero of this enterprise, see Bellamy’s unit on ‘The Epic Sublime’ (135–45) (by ‘sublime’, she means ‘sublimation’). The critic who is largely responsible for recovering the sublime itself for early modern critics is Norbrook (*Writing the English Republic*), who traces the seventeenth-century diffusion of a Lucanian (as opposed to a Lacanian) sublime especially into Milton (see also Norbrook’s more recent work on the sublime in Lucy Hutchinson).

analysis of the sublime, as a concept and as a practice, in the male Romantics as well as in their female counterparts' (Potkay 216).

Several recent monographs also speak to the ongoing importance of the sublime across the professional fields. In 2012, for instance, Mark Canuel's *Justice, Dissent, and the Sublime* argues for the relevance of the sublime to 'biopolitics', the 'name for the interpenetration of law and the body' (94). Similarly, in 2010 Alan Richardson uses 'Cognitive Theories' to track 'The Neural Sublime' in 'Romantic Texts' (book title), while in 2011 Gene Ray examines 'Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory', 'from Auschwitz to Hiroshima to September 11' (book title). And in a 2007 feminist study, *The Sublime, Terror, and Human Difference*, Christine Battersby tries to break free from the Kantian stranglehold in current work on the sublime by emphasizing 'difference' in terms of 'female embodiment or the *female* subject position' (15; her emphasis).

As Battersby exemplifies, the dominant trend in scholarship builds on a Kantian tradition focusing on *the experience of the subject in the world* (see, e.g., Guyer; De Bolla). My book locates a different centre in Longinus, whose *On Sublimity* (first century AD) focuses on *the representation of the author in the work*.³ The book applies this Longinian focus to the advent of the sublime in early modern England, and extends work in classics (Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions* [on Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Ovid]; Porter, 'The Sublime' and *Sublime in Antiquity*; H. Day [on Lucan]; Gunderson [on Seneca]), medieval studies (Auerbach; Boitani; Jaeger, *Magnificence and the Sublime* and *Enchantment*), early modern Italy (Weinberg; Costa; Refini), France (Martin), and later seventeenth-century England (Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic* and 'Sublime Object'; Sedley). By rethinking the sublime in terms of the author, I aim to break theoretical ground, shifting from reception to literary production and placing Renaissance authorship at the centre of pre-Enlightenment accounts of the sublime.⁴

In particular, we cannot write the history of the sublime now engaging scholars across the disciplines until we have mapped the early modern

³ Cf. Norbrook, who mentions the 'need' to 'distinguish' the 'early modern sublime' from 'the version in postmodern theory, which involves a critique of Enlightenment models of representation, both in politics and language' (*Writing the English Republic* 19). I owe this citation to Trubowitz 148–9n5. Neither Trubowitz nor Norbrook makes this distinction in terms of authorship.

⁴ For overview essays, complementing Shaw, see Janowitz (on British literature); Else, Brogan, Ferguson, and R. Greene (classical to modern); Holmqvist and Pluciennik, 'Short Guide'; and three entries under 'Sublime' in *Oxford Art Online*: Ferguson, 'Longinus to Montesquieu' and 'Burke to the Present'; Freeman, 'Feminine Sublime'.

literary sublime in England, especially the four authors who bridge the classical and medieval with the Romantic and modern sublime: Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. These individuals' achievements as authors of the sublime form the foundation of the modern English canon.⁵

As yet, no one has noticed that the invention of the modern notion of the author is coterminous with the recovery of the classical sublime as an aesthetic category (cf. Bennett 49 with Sedley 8). In separate lines of research, critics have traced both the modern idea of authorship and the aesthetic category of the sublime to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century in England. As Wendy Wall puts the case for authorship:

Scholars have long recognized the sixteenth century as a time when definitions of authorship were being transformed, but had not yet crystallized into the modern meaning that would arise in the late eighteenth century: the author as the ultimate origin and governing force for a text. . . . When Spenser and Jonson used the book format to generate the author's laureate status, . . . they produce more modern and familiar images of literary authority – classically authorized writers who serve as the origin and arbiter of a literary monument. ('Authorship' 64, 86)

While many might accept Wall's formulation, some recent work pushes the Spenserian laureate project back, through Surrey and Wyatt, to Skelton and the emergence of modern English (acknowledging principal forerunners in the Middle English of Lydgate, Gower, and Chaucer).⁶

Similarly, critics trace the modern English emergence of the sublime to the sixteenth century. Indeed, the word as a noun and adjective is fundamentally a sixteenth-century invention.⁷ According to Shaw, the word 'sublime' means 'The highest of the high; that which is without comparison; the awe-inspiring or overpowering; the unbounded and the undetermined' (156). Yet *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* recalls that the word derives from

⁵ Teskey identifies a slightly different quartet as the foundation of the modern English canon: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton (*Delirious Milton* 1). I do not dispute this model but rather adjust it to focus, first, on *modern* English, and second, on authors for whom the sublime has been neglected. See below on both Chaucer and Milton.

⁶ For details, see Cheney, *Reading Sixteenth-Century Poetry*, which is indebted to Helgerson on 'Self-Crowned Laureates' (book title), to Griffiths on Skelton, and to Walker on Wyatt and Surrey, as well as to both Sessions (*Surrey*, 'New Poet') and Burrow ('Experience of Exclusion') on Surrey as the heir of Wyatt.

⁷ In fact, the *OED* lists no fewer than twenty-nine cognates of words connected to the sublime, with several originating in the fifteenth century (and some strictly in alchemy). For example, the adjective 'sublimate' traces to c. 1425, meaning 'Raised to a high degree of excellence' (Def I.1.), citing 'Bk. Found. St. Bartholomew's (1923) 17 (*MED*), This holy chirche . . . Fowndyd and endewid with havenly Answer, I-sublymate with many pryvilegies of notable men'. Nonetheless, 'sublime' itself traces to the sixteenth century.

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the Latin *sublimitas*, and comes to mean ‘that quality of genius in great literary works which irresistibly delights, inspires, and overwhelms the reader’ (1450). Fortuitously, the *OED*’s first recorded example under Definition 2, ‘Of language, style, or a literary work: expressing noble ideas in a grand and elevated manner’, traces to Angel Day, who, in his 1586 *English Secreterie*, discusses the three styles of rhetoric: low, middle, and high or ‘sublime’. The sublime style, Day says, is

the highest and stateliest maner, and loftiest deliverance of anye thing that maye bee, expressing the heroicall and mightye actions of Kinges, Princes, and other honourable personages, the stile whereof is sayde to be tragicall swelling in choyce, and those the most hautiest termes. (21)

One of the sticking points of criticism is whether authors in sixteenth-century England understand the sublime merely as a ‘style’, or whether it accrues the kind of ‘thought’ which Enlightenment figures like Kant lend to it.⁸ Day makes plain that he talks about the sublime style by expressing its content: it is a heightened style designed to depict the most elevated of topics, the politics of kings, within the high genre of tragedy.⁹

As so often, the *OED* date of 1586 needs to be pushed back. In 1542, Thomas Elyot declines the Latin thus in his *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie*:

Sublime, on hygh.
Sublimis, me, hygh, that which is above us.
Sublimitas, heyght.
Sublimiter, hyghly, on heyght.
Sublimo, *mare*, to sette on hygh.

(sig. 6.1.ii)

Evidently, however, the earliest use of the ‘sublime’ (as an adjective ‘In predicative use. Chiefly *poet[ic]*’) dates to 1567, when Matthew Parker (the benefactor of Marlowe, who went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, on a Parker scholarship) talks about a heightened form of poetry: ‘Accent in place: your voyce as needth, / Note number, poynte, and time: / Both lyfe and grace: good reading breedth, / Flat verse it reysth sublime’ (‘To the Reader’, *Whole Psalter Translated into English Metre* 13–16).

⁸ Cf. Monk: ‘To write on the sublime style is to write on rhetoric; to write on sublimity is to write on aesthetic. The sublime style is a means to an end; sublimity is an end in itself’ (12). For a recent, detailed rejection of the sublime as reducible to style, see Doran 15, 32–40.

⁹ On the Longinian sublime style and ‘The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance’ (book subtitle), see Shuger: ‘Longinian sublimity . . . possesses strong sacral overtones,’ ‘spiritualiz[ing] the grand style’ (38; see 7, 29).

Here, somewhat astonishingly, Parker versifies versification, and in the process elevates the whole idea of an English sublime poetry.

In addition to Parker, Elyot, and Day, many sixteenth-century writers use the word ‘sublime’ in a literary sense, connecting it with language and a heightened experience: they include Roger Ascham (1570), Thomas Newton (1581), Nicol Burne (1581), Philip Sidney (*c.* 1582 and 1593), Thomas Churchyard (1587), William Fowler (1587), Robert Greene (1589, 1589), Thomas Bilson (1589), Fulke Greville (1589), King James VI (1591), Sir John Davies (*c.* 1594), Spenser (1596), Thomas Bell (1596), Francis Meres (1598, translating Luis de Granada), and Edward Fairfax (1600, translating Tasso).¹⁰

Among these examples, Sidney’s use of ‘sublime’ as a verb in *Astrophil and Stella* is especially notable, spoken by the stargazer himself: ‘Those words, which do sublime the quintessence of bliss’ (77.8). As the word ‘quintessence’ indicates, Sidney appears to understand the sublime simply as an alchemical term, meaning ‘extract’ (Ringler, ed. 481); but closer inspection reveals a potential Longinian trace, for Astrophil’s topic is in fact not alchemy but language, and, in the context of Petrarchan sonnet-teering, poetic language.¹¹ Specifically, Astrophil praises Stella’s ‘beautie’ (2) for its divinity (‘That grace, which Venus weepes that she her self doth misse’ [4]), and his praise settles on Stella’s own language: ‘words’ (8), ‘voyce’ (9), ‘conversation’ (10), and ‘true speech, the name of heav’n it beares’ (11). As the final line of the sonnet clarifies, Sidney talks about an inspired poetic representation of female beauty: ‘Yet ah, my Mayd’n Muse doth blush to tell the best’ (14). In context, then, the word ‘sublime’ is artistic and authorial: Stella’s poetical language has the power to sublime, extract, refine the essence of bliss in Astrophil. The alchemical discourse of

¹⁰ For my discussion of several of these texts, see *Marlowe’s Republican Authorship* 39–42. Thanks to my research assistant Paul Zajac for helping to compile a new list, about which he writes: ‘Between 1500 and 1600, Early English Books Online picks up 94 sources (including some repeats) that contain some form of the word “sublime”, for a total of 352 usages (forms of the word appear multiple times in some sources). Of the 94 sources that use a form of the word, more than 50 of them use it in Latin or another Romance language (either the entire work is written in a foreign language, or the word appears in an extended passage of a foreign language). This indicates . . . that an educated person in England living (especially) in the latter quarter of the sixteenth century could very likely have encountered the word “sublime”, even if s/he only read books printed in England. The list of 17 texts (21 usages) includes forms of the word “sublime” connected to *height*, *elevation*, the *soul*, *God*, or a *heightened style*. The list excludes all uses that were strictly alchemical or scientific, as well as non-English passages, except Elyot’s Latin to English definitions and rare cases where a few foreign words appeared untranslated in an otherwise English sentence.’

¹¹ In Chapter 6, I further discuss the way scholars have ‘neglected the central place of natural science [alchemy in particular] in the early modern lexicon of *sublimis*’ (Martin 80). On Petrarchan sublimity, see below.

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sublimity is Petrarchan, designed to heighten the poet's skill to celebrate female beauty and virtue, especially her power to speak eloquently. As Astrophil allows us to see, Stella's linguistic sublimity has a (pre-)Kantian edge, for it 'Makes me in my best thoughts and quietst judgment see'; he adds that such sublimity makes him truly 'blest' (12–13).¹²

During the early seventeenth century, Donne, Jonson, and their heirs in poetry, drama, and prose prepare for Milton toward the middle and end of the seventeenth century in making 'sublime' a major word in English literature. Donne, for instance, uses cognates of the word four times in his poetry ('To the Countess of Bedford' (l) 1; 'To Mr Tilman' 32 and 34; and 'Valediction: of the Book' 13). Reminiscent of Sidney (perhaps recalling Sidney), all four uses are alchemical in orientation, referring to a process of elevated desire as a purifying refinement that clearly means something to this author; but Donne also means 'elevated, superior' (A.J. Smith, ed. 656). The use in 'Valediction: of the Book' is especially important, dating perhaps to the 1590s or the early seventeenth century, because Donne places the word 'subliming' in the context of his own English poetic authorship. In his nine-line stanza designed to overgo the Spenserian stanza from *The Faerie Queene*, Donne makes an elevated claim about his art: his private lyric inspired by his mistress will 'out-endure' (5) the female-inspired public poems of Homer, Virgil, Corinna, Pindar, and Lucan:

Study our manuscripts, those myriads
 Of letters, which have past 'twixt thee and me,
 Thence write our annals, and in them will be
 To all whom love's subliming fire invades,
 Rule and example found.

(10–14)

Donne's intimate manuscript verse 'letters' to his mistress set a new 'Rule and example' for the epic 'annals' of poetic history, precisely because they

¹² I owe this line of thinking to an anonymous respondent to my paper on the authorial sublime at the 2010 Geneva Conference on Medieval and Early Modern Authorship. Sidney uses the word 'sublimed' also in the 1593 edition of *Arcadia*: 'For *Basilus* having past over the night more happie in contemplation then action, having had his spirits *sublymed* with the sweete imagination of embrasing the most desired *Zelmane* . . .' (204; emphasis added). On Sidney's interest in sublimity in *The Defence of Poetry*, see Lehtonen, 'Peri Hypsous in Translation'. For commentary situating Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* in terms of the 'sublime newly revived from the mid-sixteenth century if not before by the circulation and translation of Longinus' treatise', as well as in terms of 'the recent resurgence of interest in the Renaissance sublime', see Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry* 16n24 and xii. In particular, Bates 'tak[es] . . . the cue' of recent work to suggest that 'elements of a post-Kantian aesthetic can indeed be traced back, possibly via Bacon, to Sidney' (xii) – specifically, Sidney's interest in the poet's divine force' as 'belong[ing] . . . to the [Longinian] theory of the sublime' (16n24; see also 124, 153, 172n186, 217). I discuss Bacon in Chapter 1.

are ‘invade[d]’ by ‘love’s subliming fire’ – a literary representation of desire that is pure, refined, and elevated: sublime. While Donne’s references to classical poets are direct, his challenge to Spenser appears in the stanza form itself. The sublime has an intertextual dimension. As we shall see, the idea of an ‘intertextual sublime’ forms one of the theoretical contributions that the present book aims to make to recent work on the sublime.¹³

Moreover, once we remember that it is Spenser who at this time was England’s premier love poet, we can witness Donne responding to England’s national poet. Donne’s interest in sublime poetry, however, goes further; his real point is that only his sublime love poetry will become immortal, lasting longer than the canonical poets of the West: ‘posterity shall know it too’ (4), for ‘This book’ will be ‘as long lived as the elements, / Or as the world’s form, this all-graved tome / In cypher write, or new made idiom’ (19–21). Donne is best known as a manuscript coterie poet, but ‘Valediction: of the Book’ is merely one poem that aims to overgo such public poets as Spenser by *out-subliming* them.¹⁴

A more formal subliming of Spenser as ‘England’s first laureate poet’ (Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* 100) appears in a remarkable yet neglected poem of precisely 366 lines (perhaps recalling Petrarch’s 366 poems in the *Rime sparse*) by John Lane, titled *Alarum to Poets*, probably dating to around 1616 (pub. 1648). In a Spenserian allegory eventually removed to ‘Faery Land’ (229, 236), Lane tells of a Duessa-like character named Delfisa who tries to deceive a Una-like character named Averdi, a high-soaring lady who finally settles at Belforma Castle – a kind of Chaucerian House of Fame – where ‘Whole chirmes of Poets thither congregate, / To serve that soveraigne Beauty [named Oneida], which had power, / To ravish each observing Paramour’ (246–8):

Now all these Laureats standing at her gate,
 Own offices did, and her love dilate,
 In straines, conceits, and stile alike sublime,
 As love could ravish nature up divine!

(267–70)

¹³ I introduced ‘The Intertextual Sublime’ in a paper of this title at the first conference on the sublime held by classicists, Trinity College, Cambridge, 7 March 2008. Thanks to the organizers, Henry Day and Philip Hardie.

¹⁴ On Donne as a coterie poet, see Marotti. For a counter, see Cheney, ‘Donne’s Literary Career’; for Donne’s counter to Spenser, see Cheney, ‘*Artes Poeticae*’. Referring to Donne’s sublime poetry, G. Alexander quotes Thomas Carew’s 1633 elegy, ‘the flame / Of thy brave soul . . . shot such heat and light / As burnt our earth, and made our darkness bright,’ in order to conclude: ‘If th[is is] . . . not yet evidence of the influence of Longinus’ *On the Sublime*, [it is] . . . a clear sign that the intellectual climate was ready for it’ (‘Literary Criticism’ 98).

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For this Spenserian-sounding laureate choir, poetry is sublime – not just its ‘stile’ but also its ‘straines’ or poetic forms and its ‘conceits’ or metaphoric representations – because it performs a miracle: ‘love . . . ravish[es] nature’ into a ‘divine’ state.¹⁵

The cases of Lane, Donne, and Sidney help us see that the trajectory of the sublime as a word has never been tracked, but one conclusion suggests itself: while the word has a sturdy first presence among sixteenth-century authors, it becomes especially significant during the early seventeenth century, and certainly by the time Milton bequeaths it to the Romantics.¹⁶

Moreover, as Bernard Weinberg has shown, the first known printed edition of the primary treatise on the concept, Longinus’ *On Sublimity*, written in Greek (*Peri hypsous*), was printed in 1554 by Franciscus Robortello, while another edition appears in 1555, and still another in 1569–70.¹⁷ Two lost Latin translations date to 1554 and 1560, while the first extant Latin edition dates to 1566, and another appears in 1572. That makes seven sixteenth-century Continental editions. The first English edition does not appear until 1636, a combined Greek and Latin text, while the first English translation, by John Hall (Milton’s disciple), needs to await until 1652. In the first formal definition of the sublime in English (Monk 19–20), Hall writes:

It must therefore have somewhat I cannot tell how divine in it, for it depends not on the single amassing or embroidery of words, there must be in it, excellent knowledge of Man, deep and studied acquaintance with the passions, a man must not onely know very perfectly the agitation of his own mind, but be sure and conversant in those of others And yet all this, without somewhat which I cannot expresse, is but the smallest part

¹⁵ In books on the Jacobean Spenserians, both Grundy and O’Callaghan neglect Lane; but his *DNB* biographer reminds us that Lane follows Spenser both in writing ‘a long pastoral modelled after the calendar structure of Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calender*’ and in completing Chaucer’s ‘Squire’s Tale’. In *Theatrum poetarum*, Milton’s nephew Edward Phillips ‘writes a glowing tribute to Lane’, ‘asserting that, had his longer works been published, they “might possibly have gain’d him a name not much inferiour, if not equal to Drayton, and others of the next rank to Spenser”’ (Underwood).

¹⁶ Alone among early modern authors, Milton’s sublimity has been much discussed: see Abrams; Weiskel; S. Knapp; Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime*; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*; Maxwell; Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* 258–72; Trubowitz; Sedley; D. Hopkins; Martindale, ‘Milton’s Classicism’. In a landmark study, Nicolson singles Milton out to mark a shift from the ‘earlier’ model of what she terms ‘Mountain Gloom’ – the Renaissance commitment to viewing the landscape negatively, unsublimely – and ‘Mountain Glory’, which views the landscape sublimely (3, 273).

¹⁷ Until ‘the beginning of the nineteenth century’, the author was thought to be ‘Cassius Longinus, a famous rhetorician of the third century A.D.’ (Costa 224). Heath has revived the case for Cassius Longinus (15), but classicists have not been persuaded (see, e.g., Halliwell 327–8n2).

that goes to the building up of such a prodigy, there must be somewhat *Ethereal*, somewhat above man, much of a soul separate, that must animate all this, and breath [*sic*] into it a fire to make it both warm and shine. (qtd. Monk 19–20; emphasis in original)

While challenging, Hall's formulation is important for defining the sublime as a 'divine' form of 'words', derived from a learned 'knowledge of Man' about both the 'passions' and the 'mind', in an 'agitat[ed]' state to be classified as '*Ethereal*', because it 'animate[s]' a 'fire' at once 'warm' and 'shin[ly]'.¹⁸

The publishing history of *On Sublimity* helps explain why many today mistakenly think that the sublime becomes a significant topic in England only in the late seventeenth century.¹⁹ Yet the printing of Longinus on the Continent during the sixteenth century, and the sixteenth-century use of the new word 'sublime', suggests that something was in the water much earlier.²⁰

In revisionary work during the 1980s, Gustavo Costa argues that Longinus' 'treatise was a significant component of sixteenth-century aesthetics', and he supports his thesis by 'examining the Latin translations of *On the Sublime* which were made in Renaissance Italy' (224). Taking a cue from Weinberg, Costa features a 'Latin rendering of *On the Sublime*' that 'may have preceded the *princeps*', which he attributes to 'the well-known Roman humanist Fulvio Orsini' (225): 'The Longinian sublime became an essential component of the cultural and artistic achievements sponsored by the powerful Farnese family whose mentor was Orsini' (228). One feature of Orsini's work on the sublime that will become important to the present argument is his translation of the Greek word for 'democracy' as '*respublica*' in 'establishing a direct link between the flourishing of eloquence and liberty' (229). In addition to emphasizing Orsini, Costa features the

¹⁸ For detailed discussion of Hall's translation, see Patterson, *Reading between the Lines* 259–65; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic* 137–9, 212–21.

¹⁹ This was Monk's 1935 conclusion, which he extended in the 1960 edition (10–28).

²⁰ In a personal communication, Simon Hornblower draws my attention to the topic of sixteenth-century scholars translating the Greek term *hypsous* as the Latin term *sublimis*. Indeed, the record shows that scholars were not sure how to translate the Greek word. Most importantly here, Hall's title is *Peri Hypsous, or Dionysius Longinus of the Height of Eloquence*. As Costelloe observes, the titles of early modern editions of Longinus show that 'the term *sublimis* was neither an obvious nor an automatic rendering of the Greek, with editors, translators, and commentators employing a variety of terminology: *de altitudine & granditate orationis* (undated, probably of the first half of the sixteenth century); *de grande, sive sublimi orationis* (Robortello); *de grandi orationis genere* (Pizzimenti); and *della altezza* (height/greatness) *del dire* (da Falgano)'. As Costelloe adds, 'Other editions use "sublime" alone', citing Manutius, a 1644 reprint of Pizzimenti, Portus, and Paganus (4).