- **Longinus – *On the Sublime***
- Preface:
- Longinus begins an inquiry into what the sublime is in art, particularly in drama and writing, and how it is achieved
- Although not explicitly defined until Book 8, Longinus defines the sources of the sublime as follows:
    - Five Principles Sources from which Sublimity is Derived
        - 1) Grandeur of thought
        - 2) Vigorous and spirited treatment of the passions
        - 3) Artifice/skill in the employment of figures of thought and speech
        - 4) Dignified expression – proper word choice and use of metaphors
        - 5) Majesty and elevation of the structure
- Over one-third of the original text is lost, including a separate text where Longinus said he would develop a theory of the role passion plays in the sublime
- **Book 1**
- Longinus begins by saying that a treatise of this nature ought to offer profit for the trouble of its perusal and that it must do two things
    - 1) Define the subject
    - 2) Point out how and by what methods we may become masters of it ourselves
- Longinus says his object here is putting together a few notes on the Sublime
    - To that end, the key question is how do we become skilled to create the sublime
- As an aside, Longinus invites criticism of his argument but also suggests we ought to praise the writer for his or her success instead of blaming him or her for the writing's omissions
- Longinus starts by calling the sublime a loftiness and excellence of language
    - He states that it is not an appeal to reason
        - "A lofty passage does not convince the reason of the reader but takes him out of himself."
    - Rather, the sublime, "acting with an imperious and irresistible force, sways every reader whether he will or no"
    - Thus with reason and an appeal to reason, the audience or reader may choose to accept the reasoned proposition or not – but with the sublime, the audience or reader has no choice but to accept
- According to Longinus: "Skill in invention, lucid argument and disposition of facts, are appreciated not by one passage, or by two, but gradually manifest themselves in the general structure of a work; but a sublime thought, if happily timed, illumines an entire subject with the vividness of a lightning-flash, and exhibits the whole power of the orator in a moment of time."
- **Book 2**
- Longinus asks whether there is a way to touch the sublime

- He states that the sublime comes not just from natural genius – which is certainly part of the sublime – but also from the carefully cultivated technical ability to control and deploy aspects of the sublime
    - The passionate mood of the sublime, he says, must be controlled by good counsel; a counsel that knows how to curb some of the sublime impulses but also how to set them free when the time is right
- The writer's skill in argument and lucid arrangement of facts can only be appreciated in the overall structure and sweep of the work
    - But a sublime thought, if happily timed, illumines a subject with the vividness of a lightning flash and exhibits the whole power of the orator in a moment of time
        - The sublime strikes in an instant
- **Book 3**
- Certain attempts at the sublime cause confusion and obscurity, and not energy in the prose
- It is true that because of the dignity and seriousness of tragedy's subject matter there is a certain "swelling of diction" that is allowable, but this is not a license for outright maudlin, melodramatic prose
    - For we cannot pardon a "tasteless grandiloquence"
    - Thus, Longinus says, we must avoid the "frothy" style
    - These writers who write in such an overly florid style "blow a little a pipe and blow it ill"
- Bombast is one of the hardest things to avoid in writing – yet bombast destroys the sublime
    - Bombast comes from writers who are insecure in their style and who are afraid of being thought of as not momentous enough
    - The writer must remember that it is objectionable to add bulk to the prose for the sake of looking serious
- Longinus identifies three major faults that plague writers trying to achieve the sublime
    - 1) Bombast – the overly dramatic prose
    - 2) Puerility (amateurishness) – the overly explained prose that reads like a frigid, technical explanation
    - 3) False Sentiment – the empty display of emotion in prose in a place where emotion is not called for or where greater emotions is used than is fitted to the situation
        - We often see an author "hurried by the tumult of his or her mind into tedious displays of mere personal feeling which has no connection to the subject"
        - And how ridiculous does the author appear when his or her effusive display of emotion does nothing but leave the reader cold

- **Book 4**
- In an author's eagerness to strike out new thoughts, they often fall into absurdity
- As a technical note, the author must choose his comparisons wisely so that they do not look patently absurd in other contexts
    - For example, the author Timaeus, in attempting to say something very fine about Alexander the Great said he "annexed the whole of Asia in fewer years than Isocrates spent in writing his panegyric oration in which he urges the Greeks to make war on Persia."
        - Longinus ridicules this as absurd – for how strange, he says, is it to compare the "great Emathian conqueror" with an Athenian rhetorician
    - Further, if you take the comparison's meaning – that length of time to achieve a great feat is the measure of greatness – then Isocrates, we must say, is greater than all of Sparta for it took Sparta thirty years to conquer Messene but it only took Isocrates ten years to construct his treatise
        - So in the original context, we have Isocrates as lesser than Alexander – fair enough – but transporting that mechanism of comparison to another context we have Isocrates as greater than all of Sparta, something patently absurd
    - Thus, Longinus, advises the writer to make the right comparison so that the audience's intuition is preserved and rewarded
        - Faulty comparisons will turn a reader off
        - To fully consummate his point, Longinus cites one more example, highly contextual to his time and place
        - Longinus cites the writings of Xenophon and an instance where Xenophon was praising the Spartans as modest and said this quality could best be seen in their eyes
            - The eyes, Longinus says, are a strange way to observe modesty because "it is commonly said that there is nothing by which an impudent fellow betrays his character so much as by the expression of his eyes."
                - Thus Achilles, in his feud with Agamemnon in the *Iliad* calls the king a "drunkard with eye of dog"
- **Book 5**
- These excesses in the poet's language can be traced to a common cause – the poet's trying to pursue novelty of thought
    - While pursuing novelty of thought is perhaps the only way to actually achieve such novelty of thought, it often leads to egregious failures
    - Thus the question is, if we are to pursue novelty of thought and pursue sublimity, how do we avoid the faults of style that are often the results of such attempts
- **Book 6**

- To start answering this question of how to achieve the sublime without instead falling victim to faults of style, it is first important to have some definite theory of the sublime and establish firm criteria of the sublime
    - This is itself a difficult task – stating criteria of the sublime – because it is a type of style judgment which is nevertheless an inherent part of establishing the sublime
        - And ultimately, Longinus concedes, this type of style judgment can only be the final product of long experience
- **Book 7**
- In determining how to judge style, Longinus offers this first principle that "it is proper to observe that in human life nothing is truly great which is despised by all elevated minds"
    - Longinus then offers the following example from outside of literature:
    - "For example, no man of sense can regard wealth, honor, glory, and power, or any of those things which are surrounded by a great external parade of pomp and circumstance, as the highest blessings…certainly those who possess them are admired much less than those who, having the opportunity to acquire them, through greatness of soul neglect it."
    - In other words, when looking for the truly sublime it is important to be skeptical of what is commonly praised
        - Often a small inquiry or analysis into these popular conceptions reveals them to be hollow, empty of the thing it supposedly has
- On the matter of the sublime, Longinus, in one of his most famous quotes on the subject, says **"It is natural to feel our souls lifted up by the true sublime and to feel a generous exultation of joy and pride as if we were the authors of this sublime instance"**
- The sublime must:
    - Dispose our minds to lofty ideals
    - Suggest thoughts which extend beyond what is actually expressed
    - Not make us think less of the idea the longer we read it
- "When a passage is pregnant in suggestion, when it is hard, nay impossible to distract the attention from it, and when it takes a strong and lasting hold on the memory, then we may be sure we have lighted on the true sublime."
- The sublime pleases all readers and always pleases them
    - The true test of sublimity is when it creates its impression on a wide swath of readers irrespective of the age, pursuits, aspirations, language, etc. of all those readers
- **Book 8**
- The Five Principles Sources from Which Sublimity is Derived
    - 1) Grandeur of thought
    - 2) Vigorous and spirited treatment of the passions
    - 3) Artifice/skill in the employment of figures of thought and speech

    - 4) Dignified expression – proper word choice and use of metaphors
    - 5) Majesty and elevation of the structure
- These five principles of sublimity assume the presence of a certain gift in commanding the language
- The first two principles depend mainly on natural gifts while the remaining three are part of the technique of art that can be learned
- "Nothing is so conducive to sublimity as an appropriate display of genuine passion."
    - This passion, when presented properly, bursts out with a "fine madness" and strikes the audience as divine
    - And yet some passions are low and do not lead to sublimity – for example, pity, grief, fear
- **Book 9**
- The first condition of sublimity – grandeur of thought – is the most important
    - This "grandeur of thought" is a natural faculty rather than an acquired one
    - Nevertheless, we can train up whatever our natural ability is by cultivating noble thoughts
    - Sublimity shows the image of greatness in the soul
        - Silence can sometimes accomplish this as well as action
        - For example, the silence of Ajax in Book 11 of the *Odyssey* is an example of this
            - Odysseus is telling the story of his travels to the underworld and the Greek heroes he met there including Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax
            - After the death of Achilles, there was a contest between Ajax and Odysseus over who would be awarded Achilles's armor
                - Both men play an important role in recovering Achilles's body under heavy fighting in order to give Achilles a proper burial
                - Ajax and Odysseus make their case to the other Greek warriors as to why they should receive the armor as an honor for this heroic effort they both made
                - Odysseus, who is far more skilled in speaking and persuasion than Ajax, and who has the help of Athena at this moment, succeeds in making the best case and is awarded the armor over Ajax
                - Ajax subsequently commits suicide as a result of this perceived blemish on his honor
            - And thus, when Odysseus encounters Ajax in the underworld, and Ajax refuses to speak a word to Odysseus, it is a powerful moment full of subtext and meaning, and, for Longinus, achieves the sublime

- True grandeur of thought, Longinus says, can be found only in those whose spirit is generous and aspiring
- "For, those whose lives are wasted in paltry and illiberal thoughts and habits cannot possibly produce any work worthy of the lasting reverence of mankind"
- And anyone whose thoughts are full of majesty will naturally see those thoughts be full of sublimity
- "It is only natural that their words should be full of sublimity whose thoughts are full of majesty. Hence sublime thoughts belong properly to the loftiest minds."
    - Longinus, to show the loftiness of mind of Alexander versus his contemporaries shares an anecdote about the conqueror
    - Parmenio, one of Alexander's generals, questioned Alexander over his constant pursuit of conquest, saying "Were I Alexander I should have been satisfied" to which Alexander replied "And I [would be], were I Parmenio…."
    - Thus we see the comparison between a lofty mind and a lesser mind, says Longinus
- As a general point about the sublime, Longinus says that the sublime has a scale, a certain vastness to it
    - The sublime implicates a great swath of things
    - In certain instances of the sublime we feel as if the whole universe, heaven and hell, mortals and immortals, share in the conflict and peril of the situation presented
- As one more example of a sublime passage, Longinus quotes a scene in Book 17 of the *Iliad* where a sudden and mysterious darkness falls over the battlefield such that Ajax and the Greeks cannot see their rear lines
    - Ajax is desperate to tell Achilles that Achilles's closest friend and brother-like figure, Patroclus, has been killed in battle, but he cannot see where Achilles might be because of the darkness
    - Then, amid all the fighting going on around him, with this errand of telling Achilles on his mind, Ajax says: "Almighty Sire, only from darkness save Achaia's sons; No more I ask, but give us back the day; Grant but our sight, and slay us, if thou wilt."
    - In other words, at a moment of great danger and calamity and in the midst of fighting off the Trojans, Ajax prays to the gods not to save himself (in fact he seems indifferent about his fate and those of his comrades: "slay us, if thou wilt;" but is only concerned with sending the news to Achilles that Patroclus is dead
    - Longinus points out how selfless and noble Ajax is acting here – not thinking of himself or the battle but of this heavy responsibility to tell a fellow warrior that a comrade is slain
- Longinus concludes Book 9 by comparing Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

  - He notes that the *Iliad* was composed first, when Homer was a younger man, and thus bears a certain fever that the *Odyssey*, written in Homer's older age, does not
  - Although the strain in the *Odyssey* is "pitched to a lower key" the work is as great as ever, Longinus says
  - With the *Odyssey*, compared to the *Iliad* "we begin to miss that high and equable sublimity which never flags or sinks, that continuous current of moving incidents, those rapid transition, that force of eloquence, that opulence of imagery which is ever true of nature."
  - Great poets and prose writers, when they lose their passionate fever of sublimity, tend to focus on the delineation of character
    - A great example of this is the closing of the *Odyssey* and Homer's narration of the domestic situation at Odysseus's palace, which Longinus says reads like "comedy of manners"
- **Book 10**
- Just as things in nature have constituent parts, so too does the sublime
- One cause of sublimity is "the choice of the most striking circumstances involved in whatever we are describing, and, further, the power of afterwards combining them into one animate whole"
  - Longinus is here describing the aptly chosen detail
  - This "animate" whole means the detail and the descriptive whole will continue to live in the mind of the reader
- "The reader is attracted partly by the selection of the incidents, partly by the skill which has welded them together"
- Longinus praises Sappho as being a master of this effect, saying her excellence lies in the way in which she chooses and unites the most striking and powerful details
- Longinus includes the entire text of a poem by Sappho, known in modern days as Sappho 31
  - I deem that man divinely blest
    Who sits, and, gazing on thy face
    Hears thee discourse with eloquent lips
    And marks thy lovely smile
    This, this it is that made my heart
    So wildly flutter in my breast;
    Whene'er I look on thee, my voice
    Falters, and faints, and falls;
    My tongue's benumbed; a subtle fire
    Through all my body inly steals;
    Mine eyes in darkness reel and swim;
    Strange murmurs drown my ears;
    With dewy damps my limbs are chilled;

An icy shiver shakes my frame;
Paler than ashes grows my cheek;
And death seems nigh at hand

- (As an aside, this quotation of Sappho by Longinus is the only example in which the text of this poem survives and is considered one of the greatest gifts of antiquity and of Longinus's treatise, that it preserved an entire poem of Sappho)
- Longinus praises the way Sappho describes all the senses failing at the same moment and the skill of highlighting conflicting emotions to show inner tumult (the speaker freezes/burns, raves/reasons at the same instant)
- This choosing and uniting the most striking and powerful details means writing with less ornamentation and with more dynamic styles that instill terror in the reader
- Longinus compares lines from Homer and the poet Aratus to show the difference between well and poorly chosen details
    - In book 15 of the *Iliad* Homer describes how Hector, the Trojan warrior, descends on a throng of Greek soldiers and gives battle
        - "On them he leaped, as leaps a raging wave,
          Child of the winds, under the darkening clouds,
          On a swift ship, and buries her in foam;
          Then cracks the sail beneath the roaring blast,
          And quakes the breathless seaman's shuddering heart
          In terror dire: death threatens on every wave."
- Then Aratus, in his magnum opus, Phenomena, describes the orientation of the stars and advises that during a certain time of year, sailors should not set sail for the sea will be too dangerous
    - Aratus goes on to describe how treacherous it is to be sailing when the seas are stormy and buffeting your ship
    - And, in a line very similar to Homer's line: "death threatens on every wave," Aratus concludes his description of being at sea in a storm with the line: "But one frail timber shields them from their doom"
    - Longinus is critical of this detail from Aratus because it takes away all of the terror and anxiety from the construction
- In Homer, the image of sailing on rough seas has the sailors on the brink of destruction, with every wave threatening them with death – and we are not told the fate of these hypothetical sailors but they are forever suspended in the terror of battling the harsh sea and facing death
- Aratus, however, does provide resolution, one that completely diffuses any attempt to create terror in the reader
    - Aratus lets the reader know that the hypothetical sailors battling the sea in his line are "shielded from their doom"

        - Thus there is no terror anymore in the line – we know the sailors, though their condition is dire, will not face doom but are shielded from it
        - Homer left it to us to consider how these sailors might face, Aratus, by choosing to give out a poor detail, tells us how his figures fare and cancels any emotion stirred by his construction
- Longinus, thus advises that the diction be stamped with "the peculiar terror of the situation"
    - In other words, the language should imitate the agony of the scene
    - And it should not give the reader an easy escape as Aratus does
- "Such blemishes," says Longinus, "mar the general effect, and give a patched and gaping appearance to the edifice of sublimity, which ought to be built up in a solid and uniform structure"
- **Book 11**
- Longinus now considers a tool of writing he calls Amplification and how it works in conjunction with choosing and uniting the most striking and powerful details
- Amplification – when a writer or pleader, whose theme admits of many successive starting points and pauses, brings on one impressive point after another in a continuous and ascending scale
    - Thus, Longinus recommends an ascending scale of impact
    - Amplification can take the form of exaggeration or of paying close attention to an otherwise commonplace thing or idea, or emphasizing certain facts
    - As Longinus says, "amplification takes a hundred different shapes"
- But amplification is not complete without the aid of sublimity
    - Taking sublimity from amplification is like taking the soul from the body – if sublimity is removed, the whole becomes lifeless
- **Book 12**
- Longinus here distinguishes the difference between amplification and sublimity
- Amplification is generally defined as language which invests the subject with a certain grandeur
    - But Longinus notes that this can also apply to sublimity, to pathos, to the use of figurative language, etc.
    - So for Longinus, the distinction between amplification and sublimity is that sublimity gives elevation to a subject, while amplification gives elevation but at the price of extension
        - Thus it is possible for the sublime to strike instantly in a single thought – but amplification requires an amount of "prolixity"
- A more general definition of Amplification given by Longinus is that it is "a gathering together of all the constituent parts and topics of a subject, emphasizing the argument by repeated insistence"

    - Longinus is clear that this "emphasizing by repeated insistence" is NOT the same as a concept like proof, or proving the matter, as proof lies in the domain of logic and Longinus is her describing the domain of art
- Longinus contrasts different styles of writing and speaking: those that strike all at once like thunder, and those that pour out slowly like a flood
    - Both styles can achieve sublimity, Longinus says, and should be deployed depending on which one is called for
    - The thunderous style of sublimity is appropriate when we want to rouse vehement emotion or generally carry the audience away with us
    - The effusive, flood-like style of sublimity is appropriate when we are dealing with familiar topics or with descriptive passages
- **Book 13**
- Longinus states that there is yet another path to the sublime: the emulous imitation of great poets and prose writers of the past
- Longinus says that the great writers of the past can breathe inspiration into latter-day writers
    - Thus did many of the best writers of antiquity draw inspiration from Homer
- The imitation of the great writers of the past is not plagiarism but rather the use of good forms and works to make something new on top of what the great writers have made
    - For example, Longinus says, had Plato not engaged with and emulated Homer and tried to best him, Plato's writing would not have been as moving
    - Even if it seems overly ambitious to engage with a great writer of the past for the purpose of bettering our own writing, this will undoubtedly benefit the writer
        - Taking on a great master and being defeated is not an ignoble fate and brings benefit to one's writing
- **Book 14**
- Continuing his idea of imitating the great writers, Longinus concludes that it is good to so practice and to ask how a master would have handled a certain problem that the writer is currently working on
- For only by fixing our eye on "high examples" will we be able to lift up our work
    - The writer must also envision these masters looking down on his or her work and analyzing it, as well as envision future ages looking down as well
- **Book 15**
- "The dignity, grandeur, and energy of a style largely depend on a proper employment of images"
    - The term "image" includes "every thought however presented," which issues in speech
- A broader definition of images is when the speaker is in such a rapt state that she is able to see what she is talking about and produce a similar illusion in her hearers

    - The poetical image is designed to astound, while the oratorical image is designed to give insight
        - Both images are linked in that they seek to work on the emotions
- Longinus cites the work of Euripides and a passage from his play *Orestes* as an example of an image that so enraptured the author it is able to produce a similar illusion in the audience
    - "Mother, I pray thee, set not thou upon me
      Those maids with bloody face and serpent hair:
      See, see, they come, they're here, they spring upon me!"
    - Longinus says that Euripides could see the Furies in his own eyes and "compels" his audience to see them too
    - We can hear screams leap from the page when we read the lines
- Longinus also cites Homer and an image in the *Iliad* where Achilles in battle is compared to a lion
    - Homer describes the lunge of a lion who is fighting off several men: "With tail he lashes both his flanks and sides, and spurs himself to battle"
- The poet can make the reader see the image only when the poet already sees and feels the image deeply
    - Longinus emphasizes that the dignity and grandeur of a style depends on images
- In Aeschylus's play *Lycurgus*, in another great image, Aeschylus describes the palace of Lycurgus as possessed at the appearance of Dionysus: "The halls with rapture thrill, the roof's inspired"
- Longinus notes that in poetry, a certain mythical exaggeration is allowable, even one that transcends logic
    - Whereas image in oratory depends on its likeness to reality
        - Poetic and fabulous language in oratory is harmful
    - The image in oratory must be mingled with the practical part of the argument, Longinus says
    - This practical image will not merely convince the hearer but enthrall her or him
    - In the case of the image in oratory, it lures us away from the argument being made, paralyzes our judgment, makes us forget about matters of facts, and enthralls us to the beauty of the image
        - At this moment, judgment and emotion are placed in juxtaposition, and the stronger force (emotion) will always defeat the weaker force (judgment)
            - This is the power of the image
- Longinus concludes this book by saying that sublimity of thought arises from three sources
    - 1) A native, inborn greatness of mind

    - 2) Imitation
    - 3) The employment of images
- **Book 16**
- On Figures of speech
- Figures of speech, judiciously employed, play an important role in producing sublimity
- Longinus singles out two figures of speech that he says are more or less the same – Apostrophe and Adjuration
    - Apostrophe – a digression in a speech to address someone not present, or an inanimate object or idea
    - Adjuration – a sincere entreaty to a person or thing
- He discusses an oratory from Demosthenes addressing Athenian warriors after their defeat at Chaeronea
    - Demosthenes says: "Ye did not, and could not have done wrong. I swear it by the men who faced the foe at Marathon."
    - He puts the Athenian ancestors on the same level as divinities, showing that we ought to consider those who have fallen for their country as gods, and thus, swear by them, make oaths on them
    - By equating the current warriors, who were just defeated, with the victorious heroes of old, Demosthenes heals the spirit of the defeated men by telling them their defeat at Chaeronea is no less glorious than the victories of Marathon and Salamis
        - Demosthenes holds up an example, the heroes from great battles, that he says is like his audience, and confirms his argument by employing the use of an oath and makes his praise of the dead an homage to the living
    - Further, Demosthenes, who had originally argued in favor of this war that led to defeat, anticipates this objection to his oratory – that he cannot swear by a victory when his policy resulted in such a massive defeat
        - To fend off these types of attacks from critics, Demosthenes describes the victorious soldiers of the past thusly: "Those who faced the foe at Marathon; those who fought in the sea-flights of Salamis and Artemisium; those who stood in the ranks at Platea"
            - Cleverly, Demosthenes does not say anywhere "those who *conquered*" or allude to these past soldiers being victorious
            - He artfully suppresses this word or words like it that might hint at the successful completion of these past campaigns compared to the unsuccessful campaign that is the subject of his oratory
            - He is not resting his praise and his arguments equating defeating soldiers with victorious soldiers on the *outcome* of the battle, but on the heroic spirit with which it was fought

        - All of this Demosthenes is able to effect by the figure of adjuration
            - By addressing a group of people not present for his oratory (the heroes of the past) and swearing a religious-like oath to those old heroes on behalf of the current, defeated soldiers, Demosthenes is able to make sublime arguments that his audience is like those heroes
    - But merely swearing an oath like this ("I swear it by the men who faced the foe at marathon") is not sublime
        - The grandeur and sublimity of the oath depends on using it in the right place and in the right manner, on the right occasion, and with the right motive
        - To show the importance of this, Longinus contrasts the sublime oath of Demosthenes with one by Europolis
        - Europolis says: "By mine own fight, by Marathon, I say, who makes my heart ache shall rue the day"
            - This oath, says Demosthenes, does not reach the sublime and is nothing more than an oath
            - The poet Europolis does not, like Demosthenes, swear by departed heroes as deities, so as to raise his audience up, but diverges from the men who fought the battle and instead turns to the battle itself
            - In other words, Europolis does not swear by the men who fell at Marathon, he swears by the battle of Marathon, an inanimate thing
- **Book 17**
- Longinus offers the declaration that the figures of speech that support the sublime are themselves bolstered by the sublime they produce
- Longinus tells us that the hearer can always tell when a speaker is being treacherous; in other words, if a speaker or poet is not being honest with the audience or is being deceitful with the material, then the audience will be able to detect it and the speaker/poet will have lost the audience's trust
- Thus the figure of speech that is effective is the one that allays distrust
    - To use figures that allay distrust we must call on passion and the sublime
    - Once passion and sublimity emerge in the art, all suspicion (suspicion of insincerity) will be overshadowed
    - Or, as Longinus puts it: "It is the very brilliancy of the orator's figure which blinds us to the fact that it is a figure."
    - Just as the sunlight surpasses all the stars and hides them, so too does sublimity surpass all of the other devices and hide them
- It is the passion and grandeur of language that strikes our soul first

    - Longinus: "Passion and grandeur of language, lying nearer to our souls by reason both of a certain natural affinity and of their radiance, always strike our mental eye before we become conscious of the figure, throwing its artificial character into the shade and hiding it as it were in a veil."
- **Book 18**
- Longinus considers the figure of question and interrogation
- Question and interrogation, he says, possess qualities that tend to stir an audience and giver energy to the speaker's words
    - For example, when the orator replies to herself as though she were meeting someone's objections
    - E.g.: "Shall we sail against Macedon? And where, asks one, shall we effect a landing? The war itself will show us where Philip's weak places lie."
        - The rapid interplay of question and answer adds energy to the passage and makes the orator's arguments more convincing
- "An exhibition of feeling has the most effect on an audience when it appears to flow naturally from the occasion, not to have been labored by the art of the speaker."
    - And this device of posing questions and answering them produces a moment of passion
    - The device convinces the audience that they are seeing the contemporaneous emotions of the speaker and not a pre-planned monologue
- **Book 19**
- Continuing his analysis of figures of speech, Longinus says: "The removal of connecting particles gives a quick rush and 'torrent rapture' to a passage, the writer appearing to be actually almost left behind by his own words."
    - Words and passages severed like this give a "lively impression of one who through distress of mind at once halts and hurries in speech"
- This figure is known as Asyndeton
- **Book 20**
- "But nothing is so conducive to energy as a combination of different figures, when two or three uniting their resources mutually contribute to the vigor, the cogency, and the beauty of speech."
- The writer/orator must vary the movement of his or her speech and prevent it from standing still ("for stillness produces rest, but passion requires a certain disorder of language, imitating the agitation and commotion of the soul")
    - To do this, the writer/orator must "break form" and alter the patterns of her words and constructions
- Continual variation preserves the intrinsic force of the repetition so that the order seems irregular, and conversely the irregularity gains a certain amount of order
- **Book 21**
- If efforts to vary speech are made regular by using proper connecting links, this will smooth away the passion of the passage and its vitality will be lost

    - "Passion rebels against the trammels of conjunctions and other particles, because they curb its free rush and destroy the impression of impulse"
- **Book 22**
- Continuing his inquiry into figures of speech, Longinus turns his attention to a figure known as hyperbaton
    - Hyperbaton – the transposition of words from their usual order to signal violent mental agitation
- Hyperbaton is employed to imitate signs of natural emotion – "for art is then perfect when it seems to be nature" (as a corollary to this, Longinus adds: "And nature, again, is most effective when pervaded by the unseen presence of art")
- Longinus points out that in real life when someone is under the influence of rage, or fear, or indignation, or jealousy (all powerful emotions), that person is likely to begin a sentence and swerve from it into some inconsequential thought only to double back to the original sentence, being borne with "quick turns" of her distress "as though by a shifting wind, now this way, now that, and play a thousand capricious variations on [her] words, [her] thoughts, and the natural order of [her] discourse"
- For example, in a speech of Dionysius of Phocaea, recorded in Herodotus, we hear this: "A hair's breadth now decides our destiny, Ionians, whether we shall live as freeman or as slaves – ay, as runaway slaves. Now, therefore, if you choose to endure a little hardship, you will be able at the cost of some present exertion to overcome your enemies"
    - Longinus points out that the regular sequence of this speech ought to have been: "Ionians, now is the time for you to endure a little hardship; for a hair's breadth will now decide our destiny"
    - But Dionysius of Phocaea does not lead with the natural salutation and address to his audience - "Ionians," - but instead gets right to the subject of the alarm, as though in the terror of the moment he had forgotten the usual address to his audience
    - Additionally, Dionysius of Phocaea inverts the logical order of his thoughts
        - He doesn't begin by emphasizing the necessity of exertion, which is the main point he is trying to convince his audience of, but rather he first gives them the reason as to why exertion is necessary – because a "hair's breadth now decides our destiny"
    - All of these rearrangements and deviations from the expected order of speech make the speaker's words seem unpremeditated and as though they were forced upon him by the crisis
    - As to this figure – of breaking up sentences where they are by their nature absolutely one and indivisible – Longinus cites Thucydides as surpassing all writers in the use of this figure
        - And Demosthenes, Longinus says, employs this device unsparingly and more than anyone else

        - Demosthenes, says Longinus, is not afraid to drag his audience with him "into the perils of a long inverted clause"
        - Demosthenes will begin to say something then leave the thought in suspense while he inserts some extraneous matters, one after another – matters that seem foreign and unnatural to the matter at hand – and having created a fear in his audience that this whole discourse is about to break down, and thereby forcing them into sympathy with him, only then does he add, just at the right moment, when it is least expected, the point which they have been waiting for the whole time
- **Book 23**
- "The juxtaposition of different cases, the enumeration of particulars, and the use of contrast and climax…add much vigor and give beauty and great elevation and life to a style."
- "The diction also gains greatly in diversity and movement by changes of case, time, person, number, and gender."
    - For example, using ordinarily singular words in plural ways, as when Plato says about the Athenians: "There came forth Hectors, there came forth Sarpedons."
        - Hector and Sarpedon are individuals but pluralizing their name elevates the passages and makes us consider what a sight it would be to see scores of these heroes
        - But, says Longinus, "we must only have recourse to this device when the nature of our theme makes it allowable to amplify, to multiply, or to speak in tones of exaggeration or passion"
        - Adding ornaments to every sentence is very pedantic, warns Longinus
- **Book 24**
- Conversely, putting plurals into singulars (the opposite of the example in discussed in Book 23) can also create an appearance of great dignity
    - For example, Herodotus writes: "When Phrynichus brought a drama on the stage entitled *The Taking of Miletus*, the whole theater fell a weeping."
        - Instead of using the plural and saying all the *spectators* were weeping, Herodotus choose the singular and describes only the singular *theater*, saying *it* fell a weeping
    - According to Longinus: "This knitting together of a number of scattered particulars into one whole gives them an aspect of [cooperation]"
    - The beauty of this moving from single to plural, plural to single is they give a change to the complexion of the passage and circumstances
- **Book 25**
- "When past events are introduced as happening in present time the narrative form is changed into a dramatic action"

- In support of this, Longinus cites a passage from Xenophon: "A man who has fallen and is being trampled under foot by Cyrus's horse, strikes the belly of the animal with his scimitar; the horse starts aside and unseats Cyrus, and he falls."
- **Book 26**
- "Equally dramatic is the interchange of persons, often making a reader fancy himself to be moving in the midst of the perils described "
    - Thus we read in book 15 of the *Iliad*: "Unwearied, thou wouldst deem, with toil unspent, they met in war; so furiously they fought"
    - Longinus points out how this invites the reader to think of themselves as being on the battle field and making such a judgment
        - The "thou wouldst deem" appeals to the reader to insert her- or himself into the story and begin making judgments along with the narrator as though the events of the story were happening to the reader
- Longinus here also quotes Herodotus: "Passing from the city of Elephantine you will sail upwards until you reach a level plain. You cross this region, and there entering another ship you will sail on for two days and so reach a great city, whose name is Meroe."
    - Longinus notes how Herodotus "takes us by the hand" and "leads us in sprit through these places, making us no longer readers, but spectators."
- This direct form of address to the reader has the effect of placing the reader alongside the events and characters of the story as an active participant
- Additionally, by pointing your words to an individual, as opposed to the readers generally, you do more to rouse the individual reader's interest and attention, by appealing to them as part of your story
- **Book 27**
- "Sometimes, a writer in the midst of a narrative in the third person suddenly steps aside and makes a transition to the first. It is a kind of figure which strikes like a sudden outburst of passion,"
- Longinus quotes book 15 of the *Iliad* to support his argument
    - The poem tells us that Hector "With mighty voice called to the men of Troy to storm the ships, and leave the bloody spoils: if any I behold with willing foot shunning the ships, and lingering on the plain, that hour I will contrive his death."
    - As Longinus says, the reader is moving through the text, reading the narration of events and following along and it is somewhat business-like when suddenly Hector bursts out in his own voice and makes an abrupt threat
        - There is not even any attribution to the speaker, just a sudden shift from narration to speech
        - Had Homer prepared Hector's speech with something like "And then Hector said" or "and the enraged Trojan chief shouted" it would have had a "frigid" effect on the audience and would not have stirred anyone

        - As the lines are written, without any introduction to the point-of-view switch, it creates the impression of an urgent crisis which will not allow the writer to linger and make formal lines but rather compels the writer to make rapid changes
- As another example, Longinus cites a speech by Penelope in the *Odyssey* where she instantly changes the nature of her address, at first addressing one of the suitors over his waste of the resources and wealth in Penelope's house and then suddenly she breaks off and emphasizes the prowess and heroic deeds of the absent king, Odysseus, whose house the suitors are destroying and being disrespectful to
    - From the *Odyssey*:
    - "Why com'st thou, Medon from the wooers proud?
      Com'st thou to bid the handmaids of my lord
      To cease their tasks, and make for them good cheer?
      Ill fare their wooing, and their gathering here!
      Would God that here this hour they all might take
      Their last, their latest meal! Who day by day
      Make here your muster, to devour and waste
      The substance of my son: have ye not heard
      When children at your fathers' knee the deeds
      And prowess of your king?"
- **Book 28**
- Longinus next analyzes the figure of speech known as Periphrasis – the use of indirect and circumlocutory speech or writing
- Periphrasis tends much to sublimity, Longinus says
- Periphrasis can work in concert with a literal expression, and add to the beauty of its tone, so long as the periphrasis is not inflated or harsh but "agreeably blended"
- As an example of Periphrasis, Longinus cites Plato's *Funeral Oration* where Socrates is describing the death and the state funerals of Athenian soldiers
    - From the *Funeral Oration*: "In deed these men have now received from us their due, and that tribute paid they are now passing on their destined journey, with the State speeding them all and his own friends speeding each one of them on his way."
    - Longinus notes how Plato's periphrasis involves figures like calling death the "destined journey" and describing military funeral rites as a person being "sped [on their way] by the state"
    - These turns of phrases are circumlocutionary in that they do not try to directly describe the thing itself (death) but use word play (destined journey)
    - These figures lend dignity to the otherwise morbid proceedings, says Longinus, and invest otherwise simple sentences with melody

- As another example, Xenophon, in his *Cyropaedia*, writes: "Labor you regard as the guide to a pleasant life" (where Xenophon is trying to capture the idea that hard work leads to a pleasant life)
    - Longinus compares this statement to what Xenophon might have written had he not used a periphrastic figure
        - Xenophon might have written: "You think labor is the guide to a pleasant life"
        - But by this periphrastic arrangement of words, the brief passage gets a "wider and loftier range of sentiment" than had Xenophon simply written with a more straightforward arrangement of words
- **Book 29**
- Longinus follows up his discussion of periphrasis with a caution – this device of indirect verbiage is "very liable to abuse" and great restraint is required in employing it
    - If used too often, any figure of speech will become vapid, lose its potency, and arouse disgust
- **Book 30**
- Longinus concludes his lengthy examination of figures of speech, which he identified as the third source from which sublimity is derived – and now he turns his attention to the fourth source: Dignified expression (proper word choice and proper use of metaphors)
- Longinus points out that although he has repeatedly emphasized the need to use striking and beautiful words, these words by themselves carry no heavy thought inherently within them
    - Nor are imposing language and dignified expression appropriate to every situation either
    - Longinus says "A trifling subject tricked out in grand and stately words would have the same effect as a huge tragic mask placed on the head of a little child"
    - Thus, Longinus says, the writer must use expressions appropriate to the context and material
- **Book 31**
- "The most homely language is sometimes far more vivid than the most ornamental, being recognized at once as the language of common life and gaining immediate currency by its familiarity"
    - Longinus insists that the expressiveness of common words and speech should not be overlooked
- **Book 32**
- On Metaphor
- The writer should pay attention to the number of metaphors being deployed consecutively and let the context and occasion determine the proper amount

- Metaphor comes along with the sublime – as Longinus says, "Those outbursts of passion which drive onwards like a winter torrent draw with them as an indispensable accessory whole masses of metaphor"
- Longinus cites other commentators, specifically Aristotle and Theophrastus, and their take on the device of metaphor
    - According to Aristotle and Theophrastus, the writer should try and soften harsh or extravagant metaphors with phrases like "so to say" and "as it were" or even "if so bold a term is allowable"
    - Longinus takes note of this advice but reiterates his idea that when writing in the sublime there are "native antidotes" to excessive and overly bold metaphors
        - This natural mechanism that prevents the good writer from getting carried away is the good writer's ability to regulate displays of strong feeling so that they are well timed and the good writer's ability to produce "unaffected sublimity"
    - In essence, what is happening when the skilled writer uses bold and numerous metaphors is that he or she is daring the reader to come along on this sweep of passion
        - As Longinus puts it, the writer "will not allow the hearer to pause and criticize the number of [metaphors], because the [reader] shares the passion of the speaker"
- "In the treatment, again, of familiar topics and in descriptive passages, nothing gives such distinctness as a close and continuous series of metaphors."
    - This is a type of Defamiliarization that is ahead of its time; Longinus is encouraging writers to present familiar topics in new ways so as to give the presentation of these topics distinction and make the familiar "new" to the reader [Ed.]
- Longinus cites examples of this device of giving the familiar its distinction
    - His first example is Plato's metaphoric description of the human body in his dialogue *Timaeus* – while the body is a very familiar object, Plato uses metaphor to make it new to the readers
        - Plato calls the human head a "citadel;" the neck is an "isthmus" set to divide the head from the chest; the vertebrae turn like "hinges;" the heart is the "knot" of the veins; the blood vessels are "alleys;" the blood is the "pasture" of the flesh, giving it nutrition; the body as a whole is divided into "ducts" and "trenches"
        - And when death comes, Plato says, the soul is cast loose from her moorings like a ship, and is "free to wander whither she will"
    - Longinus notes that these metaphors follow each other in quick succession in Plato and Longinus defends this succession as enhancing the power of the passions in this section

        - For Longinus, this example shows how metaphors largely conduce to sublimity and it shows the important part metaphors play in all impassioned and descriptive passages
- Though Longinus does concede that the use of figurative language has a constant tendency towards excess, and after just praising Plato for the flow of metaphor in *Timaeus*, Longinus next cites a section where Plato goes too far with metaphor and it becomes excessive
    - Longinus says: "Even Plato comes in for his share of disparagement because he is often carried away by a sort of frenzy of language into an intemperate use of violent metaphors and inflated allegory"
        - Thus, the writer must be careful to keep watch on the prose
    - The passage Longinus cites where Plato goes too far comes from Plato's dialogue *Laws*
    - Plato: "It is not easy to remark that a city ought to be blended like a bowl, in which the mad wine boils when it is poured out, but being disciplined by another and a sober god in that fair society produces a good and temperate drink"
        - Longinus says the passage reads like the writer is trying be poetic, yet the attempt falls flat
- **Book 33**
- Longinus addresses the question of whether it is better to achieve the sublime but have faults in the writing, or never achieve the sublime but the writing is flawless
    - He sides with the former – it is better to reach the sublime, but with flaws, than to never reach it all
    - Longinus says "the biggest intellects are far from being the most exact"
    - "A mind always intent on correctness is apt to be dissipated in trifles; but in a great affluence of thought, as in vast material wealth, there must needs be an occasional neglect of detail"
        - This is so because the great writer must take risks
        - According to Longinus: "The loftier walks of literature are by their very loftiness perilous"
- It is true that weak points catch the eye first and thus remain indelibly stamped in memory, but in great works we can let this point pass unregarded
    - In great writers these are not willful blunders but oversights, and the greater excellencies in the work – even if not all equally sustained throughout the whole work – ought always be voted to the first place in literature, "if for no other reason for the grandeur of the soul they evince"
- To create a little work without flaws does not make one as good a poet as Homer, whose flaws Longinus fully admits to and has categorized in this treatise

    - Several lesser poets such as Bacchylides and Io of Chios surpass Pindar and Sophocles for style but taken as a whole, the lesser poets are not of higher value than the greats
- **Book 34**
- Some writers/orators have a wider range of skill than others, but if a writer has a level of excellence that is narrow but in itself ingenious then that is the greater writer
    - Longinus here cites the example of the champion of the pentathlon who could not beat the champions in the individual events that comprise the pentathlon but who surpasses those champions in performing all of the events combined
        - In this example, the champion of the pentathlon will always be second-best as compared to any of the individual champions (although the greatness of the individual champions is narrow, its magnitude surpasses the athlete who is good at many things but not great at any)
- Longinus, in carrying this example forward, compares the oration of Hyperides to the Oration of Demosthenes
    - Longinus says in Hyperides there is a richer modulation and greater variety of excellence than in Demosthenes
        - For example, Hyperides knows "when it is proper to speak with simplicity, and does not, like Demosthenes, continue the same key throughout"
        - Longinus further says of Hyperides: "His touches of character are racy and sparkling and full of delicate flavor…how dexterous [he is] in the use of irony…his jests are pointed, but without any of the grossness and vulgarity of the old Attic comedy…he is most apt in moving compassion…and his funeral oration shows a declamatory magnificence to which I hardly know a parallel"
        - "Demosthenes, on the other hand, has no touches of character, none of the versatility, fluency, or declamatory skill of Hyperides. He is, in fact, almost entirely destitute of all these excellencies which I have just enumerated [regarding Hyperides]. When [Demosthenes] makes violent efforts to be humorous and witty, the only laughter he arouses is against himself; and the nearer he tries to get to the winning grace of Hyperides the farther he recedes from it."
            - And after heaping all this praise on Hyperides and criticizing Demosthenes so harshly, Longinus says "Nevertheless all the beauties of Hyperides, however numerous, can never make him sublime"
            - Longinus says this is because Hyperides never exhibits strong feeling, has little energy and rouses no emotion
                - As Longinus puts it: "Certainly he never kindles terror in the breast of his readers"

        - Longinus says that the advantage Demosthenes has over Hyperides is that he, Demosthenes, followed a Great Master – Thucydides – and "drew his consummate excellences, his high-pitched eloquence, his living passion, his copiousness, his sagacity, his speed – that mastery and power which can never be approached – from the highest of sources"
            - These "mighty" and "heaven-sent" gifts – for Longinus does not call them human gifts – Demosthenes has taken these gifts and made them his own
            - Thus, because of the noble qualities which Demosthenes possesses he remains supreme above all rivals
                - On the sublimity of Demosthenes: "It would be easier to meet the lightning-stroke with steady eye than to gaze unmoved when his impassioned eloquence is sending out flash after flash"

- **Book 35**
- Longinus reiterates that the sublime style is not always the most technically skilled, flawless style
    - "What truth, then, was it that was present to those mighty spirits of the past, who, making whatever is greatest in writing their aim, thought it beneath them to be exact in every detail?"
    - Longinus answers his question thusly: "It was not in nature's plan for us her chosen children to be creatures base and ignoble – no, she brought us into life, and into the whole universe, as into some great field of contest, that we should be at once spectators and ambitious rivals of her mighty deeds, and from the first implanted in our souls an invincible yearning for all that is great, all that is diviner than ourselves"
    - "Therefore even the whole world is not wide enough for the soaring image of human thought, but the human mind often overleaps the very bounds of space. When we survey the whole circle of life, and see it abounding everywhere in what is elegant, grand, and beautiful, we learn at once what is the true end of humankind's being. And this is why nature prompts us to admire, not the clearness and usefulness of a little stream, but the Nile, the Danube, the Rhine, and far beyond all the ocean; not to turn our wandering eyes from heavenly fires, though often darkened, to the little flame kindled by human hands, however pure and steady its light; not to think that tiny lamp more wondrous than the caverns of Aetna, form whose raging depths are hurled up stones and whole masses of rock, and torrents sometimes come pouring from earth's center of pure and living fire. To sum the whole: whatever is useful or needful lies easily with human reach; but we must keep our homage for what is truly astounding"

        - In other words, nature exalts us to the highest and places in us the desire to achieve her most beautiful and perfect forms
        - The lesser aspects of the natural world may be within our reach to reproduce but what we must venerate and admire most is the highest, where the sublime is
- **Book 36**
- Unlike in nature, in literature grandeur is never dissociated from utility and advantage
    - Every other resource and device of literature may make a good writer, and when a writer uses them he or she shows skill, but when the writer uses the sublime, that writer shows divinity and great spirit
    - "He who makes no slips must be satisfied with negative approbation [i.e. a lack of criticism], but he who is sublime commands positive reverence"
    - A sublime writer is able to redeem all errors by one grand and masterly stroke
- "If you were to pick out all the blunders of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and all the greatest names in literature, and add them together, they would be found to bear a very small, or rather an infinitesimal proportion to the passages in which these supreme masters have attained absolute perfection"
    - Posterity has guarded the fame of these masters and is likely to preserve it
- In sculpture, perhaps, we look for close resemblance to humanity, but in literature we want something which transcends humanity
- By the combined resources of art and nature we may hope to achieve perfection
- **Book 37**
- Longinus ends his digression on nature and art and returns to his subject of metaphor
- "Closely allied to metaphors are comparisons and similes"
- [Much of the rest of this book is lost]
- **Book 38**
- The writer, in using figures of speech, (specifically hyperbole but others as well), must know where to draw the line – for if the line is overstepped the figure is spoilt, and produces the opposite of the effect desired
- Longinus cites the example of Isocrates in his panegyric oration where Isocrates sets out to prove that Athens has surpassed Sparta in its gifts to Greece
    - Isocrates starts with these words: "Such is the power of language that it can extenuate what is great, and lend greatness to what is little, give freshness to what is antiquated, and describe what is recent so that it seems to be of the past"
    - Longinus notes that this is an odd, and ineffective thing to say at the beginning of an oration because it leads us to be skeptical of anything the speaker will say next since we have just been warned by the speaker about the manipulative powers of language
        - Thus it is unlikely that anything the speaker says will be taken as true

        - "This flourish about the power of language is like a signal hung out to warn his audience not to believe him"
- So figures – like hyperbole – work best when they appear *in disguise*
    - This disguise is produced when a writer, "impelled by strong feeling, speaks in the accents of some tremendous crisis"
    - To explain this concept, Longinus cites Thucydides's description of the massacre in Sicily: "The Syracusans went down after them, and slew those especially who were in the river, and the water was at once defiled, yet still they went on drinking it, though mingled with mud and gore, most of them even fighting for it."
        - In this passage, the drinking of water that is fouled by mud and gore and blood, and even fighting for the opportunity to drink this water, although an assembly of incredible details, is still made credible by the "awful horror of the scene described"
        - The hyperbole of drinking such water, the hyperbole of each individual detail: drinking mud, drinking gore and blood, fighting to drink such water, is hidden behind the expressiveness of the passage and the precision of its detail and by these disguises is rendered credible overall
- Longinus also cites the example of Herodotus describing the battle of Thermopylae
    - Herodotus: "Here as they fought, those who still had them, with daggers, the rest with hands and teeth, the barbarians buried them under their javelins."
        - The imagery (the hyperbole) of soldiers fighting with their teeth and bare hands against a heavily armed enemy, and the hyperbolic image of being "buried" by javelins are both extravagant but not incredible for the reason that Herodotus presents them in the course of a "tremendous crisis" and passion
- In both of these circumstances, with Thucydides and Herodotus, the hyperbole has not been dragged-in but grows naturally out of the circumstances
- When the action of a part and the passion contained in it verges on a frenzy then there is greater permission for the writer to employ extravagant figures of speech
    - And in terms of passions, and using them as vehicles for extravagant speech, mirth and humor are just as legitimate as passions as the more sober passions
    - Finally, as a figure of speech, hyperbole may be employed to either increase or conversely lessen the magnitude of a thing
        - In terms of lessening the magnitude of a thing, it can be employed to make an opponent's argument seem small or to shrink the size of a thing such as in these humorous lines:
            - "He had a farm, a little farm, where space severely pinches; 'twas smaller than the last dispatch from Sparta by some inches."

    - To appreciate the humor of these lines, the reader must know Sparta's reputation for laconic speech and terse communication

- **Book 39**
- Longinus turns now to the fifth principle from which sublimity is derived: majesty and elevation of structure (or, the arrangement of words in a certain order)
    - Concerning this arrangement, it is important to remember that harmony is an instrument which has a natural power "not only to win and delight, but also in a remarkable degree to exalt the soul and sway the heart of a person"
    - We see this truth about harmony in the way a flute is able to kindle certain emotions in its hearers "rendering them almost besides themselves and full of an orgiastic frenzy"
    - The rhythmical beat compels the listener to move in time and assimilate their gestures to the tune
        - When we know the power of music and in particular harmony to produce this kind of spell on a hearer we cannot doubt that composition – being a kind of harmony of language – has similar power
            - When composition "raises changing forms of words, of thoughts, of actions, of beauty, of melody" which dispose the reader to sympathy with those feelings, can we wonder that this enchants us and gains a complete mastery of our minds
            - The truth of this claim, says Longinus, is so universally established by his personal experience
- Just one or two extra syllables, even something that small, can kill the sublime
- **Book 40**
- All the elements of the sublime fit together and if even one is severed then the sublime is lost
- "As the different members of the body, none of which, if severed from its connection, has any intrinsic excellence, unite by their mutual combination to form a complete and perfect organism, so also the elements of a fine passage, by whose separation from one another its high quality is simultaneously dissipated and evaporates, when joined in one organic whole, and still further compacted by the bond of harmony, by the mere rounding of the period gain power of tone."
    - In other words, a piece of writing derives its sublimity from "the joint contributions of a number of particulars"
- There are some writers who, though they did not have natural powers, and though they employed common diction, still attained dignity and elevation in their writing
    - For some writers, like Euripides, their poetical quality often depends more on the arrangement of their thoughts than the thoughts themselves
    - As an example, in Euripides, Longinus cites the following passage:

        - "Whatever crossed his path, caught in his victim's form, he seized, and dragging oak, woman rock, now here, now there, he flies."
            - According to Longinus the subject of the lines is noble enough (but not overly so) but its genius comes from how Euripides does not hurry the language but lays distinct stresses on each word and advances slowly
- **Book 41**
- An affected and hurried movement in language will degrade the tone of a style
- Hurrying language is an abuse of rhythm that smacks of affectation
    - The overly rhythmical passage does not affect the hearer by the meaning of the words but just by the cadence – and this means the effect will ultimately be negligible
    - "Equally undignified is the splitting up of a sentence into a number of little words and short syllables crowded too closely together and forced into cohesion – hammered, as it were, successively together
- **Book 42**
- The sublime style is not overly compressed, nor over-extended and relaxed to an unreasonable length
- **Book 43**
- The use of the wrong word can degrade an entire lofty passage
    - Longinus here cites an example from Herodotus where he is describing a storm and says "the seas having seethed"
        - Longinus calls the phrase ill-sounding and says it detracts from the impressiveness of the rest of the passage
        - Longinus further cites this passage of Herodotus where Herodotus says "the wind wore away" and "those who clung round the wreck met with an unwelcome end"
            - Longinus says the phrase "the wind wore away" is ignoble
            - He says the word "unwelcome" to describe death is both obvious (death is obviously unwelcome) and completely inadequate to describe the extent of the disaster
                - Unwelcome might describe a wound or small harm, but the word is not up to the task of describing the enormity of death
- Longinus next focuses on a passage of Theopompous where the historian describes the Persian invasion of Egypt and tribute paid to the Persian king
    - Theopompous: "There was no city, no people of Asia, which did not send an embassy to the king; no product of the earth, no work of art, whether beautiful or precious, which was not among the gifts brought to him. Many and costly were the hangings and robes, some purple, some embroidered, some white; many the tents, of cloth of gold, furnished with all things useful; many

the tapestries and couches of great price. Moreover, there was gold and silver plate richly wrought, goblets and bowls, some of which might be seen studded with gems, and others besides worked in relief with great skill and at vast expense. Besides these there were suits of armor in number past computation, partly Greek, partly foreign, endless trains of baggage animals and fat cattle for slaughter, many bushels of spices, many panniers and sacks and sheets of writing-paper; and all other necessaries in the same proportion. And there was salt meat of all kinds of beasts in immense quantity, heaped together to such a height as to show at a distance like mounds and hills thrown up one against another."

- Longinus is extremely critical of this passage and its list-like description
- The details, he says, might have been given in one or two broad strokes and this would have sufficed
    - Instead, the list is confusing and follows no obvious grouping and merely bounces around from thing to thing, fatiguing the reader

- Longinus: "In our sublimer efforts we should never stoop to what is sordid"
    - "If we would write becomingly, our utterance should be worthy of our theme"
- In a colorful analogy, Longinus says: "We should take a lesson from nature, who when she planned the human frame did not set our grosser parts, or the ducts for purging the body, in our face, but as far as she could conceal them…and thus shunning in any part to mar the beauty of the whole."
- Having stated the principles that give nobility and loftiness to a style it is clear that whatever is contrary to these principles will degrade form and style
- **Book 44**
- Longinus now considers the question of whether it is possible that geniuses will emerge anymore, as their flourishing has apparently ceased
    - In other words, he asks: has high literary excellence faded away
- Longinus warns the writer against the love of gain and the love of pleasure, and against idolizing boundless riches
    - Following these vices, he says, only leads to more vices and hardship and ultimately destruction
    - "Are not our careers completely shipwrecked" by such vices
    - Whenever a writer takes to worshipping what is mortal and irrational in him or her, these are the inevitable results: "He never looks up again; he has lost all care for good report; by slow degrees the ruin of his life goes on, until it is consummated all round; all that is great in his soul fades, withers away, and is despised."
- Longinus: "I end by remarking generally that the genius of the present age is wasted by that indifference which with a few exceptions runs through the whole of life. If we ever shake off our apathy and apply ourselves to work, it is always with a view to

pleasure or applause, not for that solid advantage which is worthy to be striven for and held in honor."

- Conclusion:
- Five Principles Sources from Which Sublimity is Derived
    - 1) Grandeur of thought
    - 2) Vigorous and spirited treatment of the passions
    - 3) Artifice/skill in the employment of figures of thought and speech
    - 4) Dignified expression – proper word choice and use of metaphors
    - 5) Majesty and elevation of the structure