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Moving Beyond Persuasion:
Glimpses of the Sublime in Hebrews 12:18–29

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An abstract of
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James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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2016

Abstract

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By

Christopher T. Holmes

This study analyzes the form of Hebrews 12:18–29, its fit within its literary context, and its function within the epistle as a whole. Additionally, it considers the effects of the passage's imagery, diction, and emotion. To appreciate better both the form and effect of this passage, the study takes up a treatise that has been largely undervalued for the task of New Testament interpretation, *De Sublimitate*. Although ancient and modern theorists regard persuasion as the goal of rhetoric, the treatise provides a compelling account of a form of rhetoric that "moves beyond persuasion." By tracing the transformative and ecstatic effects of discourse, the perspective of *De Sublimitate* gives clearer understanding of Hebrews as a "word of encouragement" (Hebrews 13:22) and offers an alternative way to understand the distinctive rhetoric of the New Testament.

The study's introduction surveys ancient and modern attempts to account for the nature of New Testament rhetoric. Chapter one conducts a preliminary reading of Hebrews 12:18–29 and a survey of its former interpretations. Chapter two introduces *De Sublimitate,* highlighting its particular emphasis on the nature and effects of ὕψος—the treatise's central term. Since the treatise overlaps with topics typically discussed in ancient handbooks, the third chapter relates the treatise to ancient theories of style and to broader considerations of the powerful and non-rational effects of discourse. Chapter four returns to Hebrews 12:18–29 in order to show how the form of the passage displays characteristics of sublime rhetoric. The fifth chapter examines the moving and stirring effects of sublime rhetoric in Hebrews 12:18–29 and how these clarify the function of the passage in particular and of the epistle more broadly. An epilogue and appendix complete the study.

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For Jenelle

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Introduction

Ancient rhetorical theory has long been utilized in the interpretation of biblical literature. Well before modern biblical studies, Augustine, capitalizing on his former training as a rhetorician, outlines how Scripture should be read and interpreted in *Doctr. chr.* 4.[1] Having demonstrated the need for the Christian preacher to be both wise and eloquent in speech (4.6–8), Augustine turns to the writings of Paul to illustrate the eloquence of sacred writ. In what amounts to a stylistic analysis of some of Paul's letters, Augustine notes Paul's "embellishments" like the use of *klimax* (4.11) and periodic structure (4.11–13). Turning to the "eloquence of the prophets," Augustine highlights their effective use of metaphor (4.15). He praises the style of the prophet Amos, indicating those places where his vigor moves the hearers from a stupor through word choice (4.17) and observing his use of periodic structure (4.18–19). Augustine also catalogues the different styles (calm, moderate, and grand) in the writings of Paul (4.39–44) before turning to examples of the different styles in later Christian writers (4.45–50) and in his own speeches (4.51–58).

Augustine asserts that most of scripture accords with the best of secular eloquence, and can be judged and interpreted in light of ancient theory. He excuses those places where scripture falls short of those ideals as indicators of scripture's unique style and function. He admits the limits of scripture's eloquence, often addressing those who might balk at the comparison of Paul with the likes of Cicero (see, e.g., 4.8). He allows the observation that eloquence is not as obvious in scripture as it might be in some secular authors, but this reflects a distinctive strength of Christian eloquence, which is "neither lacking nor obtrusive" (4.10). Augustine even counts those places when scripture is not clear—an apparent violation of eloquent speech—as evidence for the particular function of Christian

[1] Section numbers are based on those in Augustine, *Teaching Christianity/De Doctrina Christiana* (John E. Rotelle; trans. Edmund Hill; WSA 1.11; Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1996).

eloquence: obscurity is mixed with clarity so that the interpreter might make progress in understanding the scriptures through the "mental exercise of wrestling with the text" (4.9). In sum, when compared with the principles of ancient rhetorical and stylistic handbooks, Augustine found the style of the Bible to have both continuity and discontinuity. Equally important, he did not view elements of study—the use of figures of speech and metaphor, the proper selection of words, and their arrangement in a sentence—as secondary to the overall message and function of biblical writings.

The resurgence of rhetorical-critical interpretations of New Testament compositions in the last fifty years evinces a similar judgment regarding the fit of the New Testament with ancient theory, but not quite the same regard for analyzing its stylistic features.[2] Many have turned to ancient rhetorical theory as a tool for New Testament interpretation. Beginning with the works of Hans Dieter Betz and George Kennedy,[3] the last several decades have witnessed the proliferation of articles, monographs, and commentaries applying ancient rhetorical theory to New Testament interpretation.[4] Yet, even some who apply ancient rhetorical theory to the interpretation of the New Testament

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[2] Many attribute this "re-discovery" of rhetorical-critical interpretation to the 1968 SBL address of James Muilenberg. See James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* (1969): 1–18. Muilenberg proposed rhetorical criticism as the natural outgrowth of form criticism, although he did not advise the use of classical rhetoric in the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Rather, he understood rhetoric as the identification of structural patterns, literary devices, and the movement of a literary unit. Other interpreters point out a long history of using classical rhetorical theory in biblical interpretation. See, e.g., C. Joachim Classen, "St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* (1992): 319–344; Roland Meynet, "Histoire de 'l' Analyse Rhétorique' en Exégèse Biblique," *Rhetorica* (1990): 291–320.

[3] See Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Clifton Black captures the import of the two: "In recent scholarship, Betz is among the first to bring this dish [rhetorical criticism] to the table, Kennedy adds his own seasonings, and the kitchen has been bustling every since;" C. Clifton Black, "Genealogies of Rhetorical Criticism: The Kennedy Family," in *Genealogies of New Testament Rhetorical Criticism* (ed. Troy W. Martin; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014) 51–78, quotation from p. 60.

[4] For early overviews of this growth, see Vernon K. Robbins and John H. Patton, "Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism," *QJS* (1980): 327–350; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?," *CBQ* (1987): 448–63; Wilhelm Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism in Biblical Studies," *Jian Dao* (1995): 73–96. See also Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Duane Frederick Watson, *The Rhetoric of the New Testament: A Bibliographic Survey* (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2006); Ben Witherington, III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, Or.: Cascade Books, 2009).

recognize the limits and obstacles of such application.[5] Kennedy, for example, notes that much of the New Testament relies on a "radical rhetoric" or a "distinctive rhetoric of religion" at the heart of which "lies authoritative proclamation, not rational persuasion."[6] In his commentary on Hebrews,[7] Craig Koester observes the awkwardness of applying ancient theory to Hebrews, even though references to the handbooks of Aristotle and Quintilian fill his footnotes. Much like Augustine, recent applications of classical rhetorical theory have clarified aspects of the nature and function of the New Testament writings, while recognizing the distinctiveness of Christian rhetoric.

Still, rhetorical criticism has provided a clearer understanding of the argumentative function of many New Testament compositions. As Kennedy notes, the authors of the New Testament "had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly."[8] All too often, however, this focus on persuasion has led to a flattened appreciation of the function and effect of the New Testament writings. In the hands of some interpreters, rhetorical criticism becomes a substitute for older notions of authorial intention: the *real* meaning of a composition or passage can be attained when its parts are aligned with one ancient theorist or another. Applied to Hebrews, the focus on persuasion often results in an overly propositional (i.e. the author writes so that the hearers might *believe that*

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[5] For a general discussion, see Steven J. Kraftchick, “Πάθη in Paul: The Emotional Logic of 'Original Argument',” in *Paul and Pathos* (ed. Thomas H. Olbricht and Jerry L. Sumney; SBL Symposium Series 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 39–68.

[6] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 6. Cf. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 101–2. Mack suggests that the application of rhetorical criticism offers modern readers an alternative to the radical rhetoric of the New Testament, freeing them from the rhetorics that are "harsh, divisive, and based upon non-negotiable claims to authority" in an age that demands dialogue and negotiation (101). Mack suggests that rhetorical criticism can reorient "philosophical or religious claims to truth" toward "the area of social formation" (23). Though though conversant with ancient rhetorical theory, Mack draws on the "New Rhetoric" of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca as well. See Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969)

[7] Craig R Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

[8] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 3.

something is true) and, at times, theologically problematic, understanding of the purpose of Hebrews.[9]

All the while, persuasion is the assumed goal of each writing, with little consideration of other discursive functions that may accompany or even overshadow the goal of persuasion. Yet, many ancient theorists acknowledge a variety of discursive functions, often linked to particular stylistic features. Augustine, in his discussion of Christian eloquence, retains a more robust understanding of the possible functions of the Christian orator. Yes, the preacher may need to convince the hearers of something, but the preacher can accomplish this by drawing upon a numbut of discursive functions. In addition to persuasion, the preacher must also endeavor "to win over the hostile, to stir up the slack, to point out to the ignorant what is at stake and what they ought to be looking for" (*Doctr. chr.* 4.6). Augustine recognizes that discourse, even spoken discourse that attends to form and style, may need to *do* something other than persuade. Cicero, upon whom Augustine relied to a great extent, likewise understood the various functions of discourse depended on the use of particular styles. Accordingly, both the ideal function and style for oratory differ from the functions and styles of philosophy, sophistry, history, and poetry (*Or. Brut.* 62–68). It is important to note that Cicero's list distinguishes function and style by genre, not on the basis of written or spoken discourse.

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[9] See, e.g. Barnabas Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," *NTS* (1989): 382-406. Reflecting the emphasis on persuasion, he identifies the purpose in highly propositional (and individualistic) terms: the problem concerns the first readers' "consciousness of sin," which has diminished their "confidence to draw near to the throne of grace;" the author responds by proving that Jesus's sacrifice is permanent (394–95).

Even if we assume—as Kennedy insists[10]—that the primary product of the New Testament is a speech act, not a written text, this does not require that persuasion is the only (or even primary) function or effect of each composition. As pointed by Heinrich Lausberg,[11] both orators *and* poets were artists of language (both written and spoken)[12] in antiquity, but with different tasks or offices. Both the orator and the poet share a concern over matters of composition (i.e. invention, arrangement, and style). According to Lausberg, however, the two differ in how each one views his respective task. The orator sees his "*officium* as the exertion of influence over the audience" while the "*officium* of the poet consists in concentrated (καθόλου) representation (μίμησις) of human and extra-human reality." The poet wields influence over the audience more through this μίμησις than persuasive argumentation alone.[13] As a result, the poet functions as a mimetic artist who reproduces the reality he perceives as "an *opus*," which when encountered by the audience modifies their own view of reality. While it would be unwise to overstate the differences, Lausberg's insight provides a helpful heuristic for organizing how interpreters use ancient rhetorical and literary theory to interpret the writings of the New Testament and their potential functions. Both the use of ancient theory and view of the function of the biblical writings depends in part on whether one views their authors as fulfilling the task of the orator more than the poet and vice versa.

An overemphasis on persuasion as the primary discussive function of the New Testament leads to a diminished attention to matters of style. Followed by many New Testament interpreters after him, Kennedy forcibly eschews questions of style in New Testament rhetorical criticism—even though the topic is discussed in ancient handbooks—

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[10] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 5.

[11] Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study* (trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton; Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1998), 19–20.

[12] For the spoken or aural nature of even written texts, see William A. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *AJP* (2000): 593-627; Raymond J. Starr, "Reading Aloud: *Lectores* and Roman Reading," *CJ* (1991): 337–343.

[13] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 19.

because he thinks that interpreters too often equate rhetoric with style, which distorts ancient theory.[14] As a result, identifying features of a composition's macro-rhetoric—its species of rhetoric, the division of its parts, and its manipulation of proof—has eclipsed close analysis of the stylistic features used, including word choice, the arrangement of words, and the use of figures. Even when these are considered, they rarely play more than a minor role in determining the overall meaning or function of a passage or composition.

But, what if interpreters considered the rhetoric of the New Testament in a way that did not limit its discursive function to that of persuasion alone? What if the particular style of a composition or passage was viewed as central, rather than secondary or residual, to its function? What if interpreters considered the effects of discourse that move beyond persuasion?

This study is an attempt to answer these questions. To that end, I take up an intriguing treatise that has been largely undervalued in New Testament rhetorical criticism.[15] The treatise *De Sublimitate* offers a compelling account of the function of discourse—what discourse *does,* in other words—that moves beyond persuasion. The

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[14] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 3; . Kennedy does include in his first chapter an overview of style. He notes that considerations of style include matters of the choice of words (*lexis*), the arrangement of words (*synthesis*), figures of speech and thought, and the use of periods (26–30). See similarly, Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 12–17. Mention of style beyond Kennedy's first chapter, however, is sparse: the persuasive effect of the use of figures in Matthew's Beatitudes (51–52); a brief description of the epideictic style emphasizing amplification, ornamentation, and the role of the imagination (74–75). Despite the long-recognized superiority of its style and earlier application of ancient rhetorical theory to it, Kennedy pays little attention to Hebrews. His only substantive mentions of Hebrews concern the periodic sentence in 1:1–4 (30) and the encomium of faith in Heb 11 (156).

[15] The treatise *De Sublimitate* is mentioned in the work of a few New Testament scholars, especially because of its emphasis on visualization. For Hebrews, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 92; Ben Witherington III, "Introduction to Hebrews," in *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James, and Jude* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2007) 17–96; Scott Mackie uses quotations from Longinus to describe the "mystical visuality" of Hebrews. See Scott D. Mackie, "Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JTS* (2011): 77-117, esp. 99–104.

For other New Testament compositions, see Greg Carey, "Symptoms of Resistance in the Book of Revelation," in *The Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (ed. David L. Barr; SBL Symposium Series Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 177; Christopher A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 51; Frank Thielman, "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: JSTOR Press, 1991) 169–83; Duane F. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John: The Interaction of Rhetorical Style and Invention," *JSNT* (1993): 99–123.

treatise highlights the affective and even ecstatic effects of discourse in a variety of genres, including oratory, poetry, and philosophical writings. It offers an alternative mode for analyzing the nature and function of the New Testament's "radical rhetoric." And, as I will show later in this study, the treatise links this “moving” function not only in the idea or subject matter found in discourse, but also in the way that the language has been shaped to align with it. In other words, the treatise closely unites questions of style and discursive function.

The Epistle to the Hebrews provides an effective focus text for applying the perspective of *De Sublimitate* to New Testament interpretation. Long recognized for its stylistic eloquence and adoption of rhetorical devices, Hebrews also tends toward the "radical rhetoric" of other New Testament writings. The central passage for my analysis, Heb 12:18–29, moreover, exemplifies the limits of applying traditional methods of rhetorical criticism. Its use of powerful imagery and stirring diction, along with the dominant reference to God's speech, leaves more questions than answers if persuasion is assumed to be the primary discursive function of this passage. In particular, the perspective of *De Sublimitate* offers insight into how the form of language in the passage relates to its function. As a result, this study offers a fresh understanding of how 12:18–29 fits within its surrounding literary context, its function within the epistle as a whole, and the nature of Hebrews as a "word of encouragement" (Heb 13:22). Finally, the study aims to show the suitability of *De Sublimitate* for interpretation of the New Testament and other writings from the ancient world, through my application of the treatise to Heb 12:18–29.[16]

The first chapter provides an initial reading of Heb 12:18–29, a survey of previous

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[16] The selection and comparative analysis of *De Sublimitate* with other rhetorical and literary treatises from antiquity aligns with many previous attempts to adopt ancient theory for the task of New Testament interpretation. As will become clear in what follows, it is *De Sublimitate*’s particular perspective on the nature and capacity of discourse that makes it a welcome addition to previous studies. The treatise adds one more voice from antiquity that helps interpreters see distinctive features of ancient texts and account for them in interpretation.

interpretations of it, and a more expanded discussion of past stylistic and rhetorical analyses of Hebrews. The second chapter introduces the treatise *De Sublimitate,* highlighting its particular emphasis on the effects of what I will call "sublime rhetoric."[17] Since much of the treatise evaluates components of style and their function often discussed in ancient handbooks, the third chapter orients the treatise within these theories and within a broader conversation about the powerful and non-rational effects of discourse. I return to Heb 12:18–29 in the fourth chapter, demonstrating how the passage's distinctive style or form of expression resembles the characteristics of sublime rhetoric. In the fifth and final chapter, I consider the moving function of sublime rhetoric in Heb 12:18–29 and how it accounting for it may inform our understanding of the passage and of the epistle more generally. The dissertation concludes with a short epilogue that considers further implications of my study.

[17] The appendix at the end of the dissertation traces *De Sublimitate*'s history of reception and its tenuous relationship to developing notions of the sublime in philosophy and aesthetics.

Chapter One:
Problems and Prospects in Hebrews 12:18–29

Hebrews 12:18–29 has been lauded as the "grand finale,"[1] climax,[2] and the hermeneutical key[3] to the composition.[4] Despite the prominent place afforded to it, many interpretations fail to account adequately for two significant aspects of the passage: its function within its immediate literary context and the nature and effect of the shape of its langauge and its stylistic features. In what follows, I offer a preliminary analysis of both of these aspects of Heb 12:18–29.

A Moving Vision: Considering the Place and Form of Heb 12:18–29

A Distinct Moment

Framed by the hortatory material of Heb 12:1–17 and the collection of exhortations in Heb 13, the passage stands out in its literary context because it functions as a "travelogue."[5] The author begins by describing a location reminiscent of Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb,[6] insisting that the audience has not come to such a place. He locates them instead at Mount Zion and then depicts the heavenly entourage that is there. The author's imaginative lens focuses now on angels in festive gathering, then on God, the judge of all; it

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[1] Lindars, "Rhetorical Structure," 401.

[2] Koester, *Hebrews*, 548.

[3] Kiwoong Son, *Zion Symbolism in Hebrews: Hebrews 12:18-24 as a Hermeneutical Key to the Epistle* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005).

[4] For some, in fact, this passage signifies not only the climax of Hebrews's argument but also the proper conclusion to the epistle. The content and tone of Heb 13 lead some interpreters to suspect that all or part of Heb 13 derives from later scribal activity. See, e.g. George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (AB 36; 2d ed. New York: Doubleday, 1980 [1972]): "Heb 12:29 seems to be the conclusion of the whole document, and it has no transition sentence that leads neatly to chapter thirteen...Chapter thirteen seems to be a collection of material which an editor has put together...Some of the views of chapter thirteen contradict those of 1:1–12:29. Therefore, it seems not to have been a part of the original composition and should be examined separately" (227). The case for the authenticity of Heb 13 to the original letter of Hebrews has been argued vigorously by Floyd V Filson, *'Yesterday': A Study of Hebrews in the Light of Chapter 13* (SBT 4; Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1967). See also the concise summary of the debate in Harold W Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 384.

[5] Thomas G. Long, *Hebrews* (Interpretation; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1997), 137

[6] Hebrews 12:18–21 presents a composite picture of God's speech from the mountain from LXX Exod 19 (Sinai) and LXX Deut 4 (Horeb), although the word "mountain" does not appear in our best manuscript witnesses. To retain some of this ambiguity, I have elected to refer to this mountain as the "sensble" mountain because of the author's addition of the adjectival participle ψηλαφωμένος. For further discussion, see discussion in chapter four of this study.

moves from the assembly of the first born to the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus (Heb 12:22–24). The arrangement of words in these verses invites the hearers to linger over the images through apposition, repetition of similar-sounding endings, and word length, all of which encourage them to inhabit, if only for a moment, the envisioned scene.

The author's depiction of Mount Zion in 12:22–24 and its environs stands in stark contrast to the description of the "sensible" (ψηλαφωμένῳ) mountain of Heb 12:18–19.[7] Compared to the ethereal picture of Mount Zion, the sensible mountain appears through a dizzying combination of sights (fire and darkness) and sounds (whirlwind, the sounding of a trumpet, and the sound of voices). The strongly sensory presentation, nevertheless, is somewhat elusive. How can the mountain be surrounded with fire, and yet also covered in darkness? Who sounds the trumpet and whose voices are overheard? The descriptors appear in rapid succession as the author moves quickly, nearly chaotically, from one detail to the next. Short, strange words peppered with the conjunction καί accentuate the ominous portrait of God's fiery, thundering presence at the mountain. Though the manner of presentation differs, the description of the tangible mountain also moves the hearers into the scene described.

The focus of comparison shifts slightly in Heb 12:25, and the function of the twinned scenes becomes more apparent. "Make sure that you do not resist the one who is speaking" (Heb 12:25). The author adopts the imperative mood and jerks the audiences' perspective from the two mountains to the two groups gathered at each. For all their differences—visible and invisible, chaotic and expansive—the two scenes share two important details: God speaks from each mountain and those gathered at each mountain respond. The depiction of the two mountains in Heb 12:18–24, with all of its verbal artistry, thus cannot

[7] The verb ψηλαφάω literally means to touch or handle something or someone. "Touchable" would be the most literal translation of the participle in Heb 12:18. The details associated with the description, however, imply more than the sense of touch alone. It is better, then, to speak of the location described in 12:18–21 as "sensible" or "empirical."

be separated from the turn to the imperative in 12:25. Likewise, the force of the author's command (βλέπετε) depends on the dense and sensory description in 12:18–24.

The two mountains emphasize the different locations of God's speech and the disposition of the respective hearers. At first glance, the hearers at the sensible mountain appear to display a polite resistance to God's word. They beg (παρῃτήσαντο) God to stop speaking, to cease from adding "even another word" (12:19). The command to keep the mountain clear of wild animals (12:20; cf. Exod 19:12–13) proves too difficult. The hearers are not able to endure (οὐκ ἔφερον) what is demanded of them. The author's injunction in 12:25a, however, recasts the disposition of the first hearers as more rebellious. Their desperate pleading becomes outright resistance, and the request for the cessation of God's speech becomes a futile attempt to flee from the one who warns (12:25b). Finally, with *those* hearers in purview, the second group of hearers—the hearers of the epistle—is warned against turning away from or rejecting (ἀποστρέφω) God.

Why has the depiction of the first hearers taken such a negative turn? How does fearful pleading become rejection and refusal? Here again the author's artful use of language is apparent. The author repeats forms of παραιτέομαι in 12:19 and 12:25, but draws on the verb's two different meanings to highlight the negative disposition of the first hearers. The repetition of the verb connects the need for proper hearing in 12:18–24 with the set of warnings in 12:25–27. The comparison distinguishes the location or origin of the one who addresses the two sets of hearers. The parallelism in 12:26 suggests that the one who warned (τὸν χρηματίζοντα) the first group of hearers did so on earth; the second group of hearers, however, is warned from heaven.

The voice of warning, whether issued on earth or from heaven, results in a similar phenomenon: the shaking of the created order. In the former time (τότε, 12:26), the voice of warning shook the earth. The author of Hebrews here strays from the traditions found in

Exodus and Deuteronomy associated with God's appearance and speech at a mountain. Elsewhere in Israel's scriptures, however, God's appearing to or addressing humanity is connected with the shaking of the created order (see, e.g., LXX Judg 5:4; Psa 67:9; Amos 1:14; Joel 2:10).

At this point, the author's pairing of the dispositions of the two hearers with the two shakings introduces important differences between the two locations of God's speech. First, the shaking envisioned in 12:26b–27 is based on a prophetic utterance in the past (ἐπήγγελται) that awaits fulfillment in the future (ἐγώ σείσω). In contrast, the shaking associated with the first hearing coincides temporally with the moment of hearing and response. Furthermore, the future shaking is more comprehensive. The first voice shook the earth; the promised voice will shake not only the earth but also heaven. The author cites Hag 2:6, which indicates (δηλοῖ) that this shaking will transform or remove (μετάθεσις) everything that is shakeable, which the author links to the created order.

The author thus bases his admonition that the audience members pay attention to the nature of their own hearing, presumably in the present, by employing a scriptural citation and imagery based on the results of God's activity in the future. While the actual shaking is reserved for some time in the future, the voice that warns from heaven, and especially the audience's proper disposition to that voice, remains of utmost importance in the present.

Reference to the shaking of earth and heaven allows the audience to enter, albeit imaginatively, into the scenes described. Here the author is more oblique than in the previous description of the sensible elements of the visible mountain (12:18–21). The author's reference to shaking may evoke the sights, sounds, and emotions associated with an earthquake but only implicitly. In addition, it employs words that are visual in nature. The shaking of all the things that have been made (πεποιημένων) may allude to God's

activity at creation or to the things made with human hands. Likewise, there is something nearly visual about the removal or transformation (μετάθεσις) of the created order. As the author pictures Enoch being plucked (μετατίθημι) from the earth in Heb 11:5, so here there is almost a pictorial sense of the removal of the created order.

Though the images associated with this final shaking are less developed, even their ambiguity contributes to the intended of these verses. The lack of specific images allows the audience to imagine the shaking of the earth and heaven more freely. In this sense, both Heb 12:18–21 and Heb 12:26–27 draw on the faculty of the imagination, although the mental pictures generated by the first derive from more concrete images.

In Heb 12:28–29, the author again draws on striking imagery to convey his message. The author grounds the return to the hortatory subjective (ἔχωμεν, λατρεύωμεν)[8] in 12:28 with an evocative and ominous image of God: "Our God is a consuming fire" (12:29). The image of God as a consuming fire likely derives from the reference to God as "a consuming fire, a jealous God" in LXX Deut 4:24. In Deuteronomy, the dual image of God's fiery nature and zeal for the people undergirds the Israelites peculiar relationship to God. In the immediate context (Deut 4:14–19, 23), Moses has just commanded the people to maintain covenant fidelity to God and refrain from constructing graven images. In addition, the image of God as a consuming fire recalls God's presence on the flaming Mount Horeb when Moses received the commandments (4:9–14). In this way, the physical manifestation of God's presence on the mountain (burning fire, darkness, gloom, and tempest) partially conveys God's nature as a consuming fire.

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[8] The textual tradition of Heb 12:28 demonstrates instability surrounding the mood of both of these verbs. Among other witnesses, p[46] shows the scribes's uncertainty regarding the proper form of ἔχω. Though it originally had the present indicative form (ἔχομεν), a subsequent corrector restored it to the present subjunctive form (ἔχωμεν). Beyond p[46]'s support of the indicative form, the are early and important witnesses supporting the subjunctive form (A C D L Ψ). The form of λατρεύω in the manuscript tradition also has some variety. P[46] has the aorist subjunctive form (λατρεύσωμεν), which is not corrected by a subsequent hand. Some witnesses have the present indicative (λατρεύομεν), but several early and reliable witnesses contain the present subjunctive (A D L).

The author's use of Deut 4 in Heb 12 is complex. On one hand, the language describing God's presence at Mount Horeb in Deut 4:9–14 stands in contrast to the mountain to which the audience members of Hebrews have drawn near (Heb 12:18–21). On the other hand, the author retains the image and nature of God from Deut 4. Both the Israelites *and* the audience members draw near to God, who is a consuming fire. The God who speaks from the midst of the fire in Deut 4 is the same God who promises to shake the whole created order, both earth and heaven (Heb 12:26; LXX Hag 2:6).[9] Even if the audience members do not hear God speaking with the same physical manifestations of God's awesome presence (οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε..., 12:18), God's image, nature, and presence in Heb 12:28–29 is no less awe-inspiring.

My analysis of Heb 12:18–29 has emphasized several features of its distinctive use of language and imagery:

(1) These verses burst with powerful imagery: circling flames, shaking mountains, a myriad of angels, and so forth. The dense, sensory-rich imagery moves the audience into the scenes described.

(2) In several places, the language aligns the images or subjects being discussed. The language used to describe the visible mountain in 12:18–21 mirrors the chaotic, terrifying scene described therein. Likewise, though not entirely devoid of fear, the description of Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem invites the audience to linger from one image to the next. The composition and choice of words infuses these things described with an expansive, even enduring quality. Hebrews 12:25–27 describes the two shakings more allusively, which allows the audience greater

[9] It is possible that reference to God as consuming fire evokes similar images of God elsewhere in Israel's scriptures. For example, the image of God as consuming fire in Zephaniah plays a similar world-obliterating role as God's promised shaking in Heb 12. In Zephaniah, the image evokes the ominous day of the Lord when God's wrath and zeal will consume not only the impious but the whole created order (Zeph 1:18; 3:8). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, this image of God as consuming fire is used in ways similar to that of Zephaniah, both as a signal for God's wrath (Esth 16:24) and for the punishment of the impious (Wis 16:16; Sir 45:19; cf. Deut 9:3).

freedom in picturing the events and images represented therein. Heb 12:28–29 thus grounds the proper response to God's speech in striking imagery that indicates God's nature.

(3) Though often separated from each other in modern editions of the NT and in modern commentaries, the comparison of the two mountains in Heb 12:18–24 and the warnings in 12:25–27 build on each other. Putting the verses together allows one to see the central emphasis on God's speech and the disposition of those who hear God's speech: the two mountains function as the locations of God's speech that reveal the hearers' true disposition to that speech. Hebrews 12:28–29, then, and much of Heb 13, as I plan to show, signals the actions and dispositions that arise from the proper response to God's speech.

I have provided this initial reading of Heb 12:18–29 to highlight how it stands out from its immediate literary context, a feature of the passage tht relates in no small part to the distinctive features of its style. By interweaving several sets of comparisons (two mountains, two hearers, two shakings) and drawing the audience to enter imaginatively into the scenes described, these verses focus attention on the nature and location of God's speech and the proper response of those who listen to that speech. The tone and powerful imagery reveal its distinctiveness, but greater attention to the structure and progression of Heb 12 suggests that Heb 12:18–29 is more embedded in its literary context than is typically noted.

An Embedded Moment

The inferential particle τοιγαροῦν ("therefore") in Heb 12:1 connects the verses that follow with what has just been stated in Heb 11. The participial phrase that follows (ἡμεῖς τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων) makes this all the more clear: the crowd surrounding the audience consists of the heroes of faith lauded in Heb 11. Following

the exhortation to run with endurance (12:1), the author holds up Jesus as a model of the type of endurance required (12:2–4). Then, the author draws an analogy between the audience's struggle and God's discipline. Although this discipline is uncomfortable in the present moment, it proves that the audience members are indeed children of God (12:5–11).

The inferential conjunction διό in 12:12 draws a hortatory conclusion from the characterization of suffering as God's pedagogical program. Though weary, the audience members are pushed to pursue peace with others, to retain holy living, and to remain faithful to God (12:12–17). The author's terminology here depicts the audience as athletes on the verge of exhaustion and giving up. Similar to the exhortation in 12:1–2, the author exhorts the audience to do whatever is needed to continue their struggle.

The audience's need to endure stands in contrast to the example of Esau (12:15–17). Unlike the author's hope for the audience members, Esau abandoned his birthright (πρωτοτόκια) for a single meal. Esau functions as a negative foil to those who, by enduring God's instruction, prove themselves to be God's legitimate children (cf. 12:8). Esau's choosing the tangible (βρῶσις μία) over the intangible (τά πρωτοτόκια) also anticipates the contrast in 12:18–24 between the sensible mountain and the intangible one.

The inferential particle διό in 12:28 marks a conclusion or deduction that emerges from Heb 12:18–27 or perhaps from the chapter as a whole.[10] Because they are receiving an unshakable kingdom, the audience members must hold on to grace (ἔχωμεν χάρις),[11] which enables them to offer worship that is pleasing (εὐαρέστως) to God through reverence and prayer. The awe-inspiring image of God as fire (discussed above) provides the basis for the

[10] Interpreters are divided on the function of διό here. Attridge suggests that διό is a "paraenetic conclusion" (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 382). Moffatt finds in vv. 28–29 "the final word" upon the prospects and responsibilities of the "unshakable kingdom." See James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 222. Similarly, Spicq suggests the particle "introduit la conclusion pratique." See Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1952–1953), 2:412. In contrast, Koester suggests διό here "introduces a new phase of the argument," which he identifies as the peroration (12:28–13:21). See Koester, *Hebrews*, 557.

[11] It is also possible to understand the phrase ἔχωμεν χάριν as "Let us have (or keep) grace," although most interpreters prefer to understand it as "Let us be thankful." Hebrews 12:28–29, including the meaning of this phrase, will be discussed more fully in chapter four.

author's exhortation to retain their fidelity to God.

Though more general in nature, the hortatory tone of Heb 13 elaborates more on the dispositions and behaviors commensurate with fidelity to God, but also those that demonstrate solidarity with the gathered community. The diverse actions envisioned by the imperatives define and lend texture to the broad exhortation of 12:12–17: to pursue peace, holy living, and fidelity to God. Though many commentators, including the ancient *kephalaia*, suggest a strong break at 13:1, the turn to the hortatory subjunctive in 12:28 suggests that 13:1 *continues* rather than *commences* a new section in the argument. The hortatory subjunctive in 12:28, then, functions like a hinge between the two chapters, linking the hortatory material found in 12:1–17 with that in 12:28–13:17.[12]

In summary, exhortations abound in the first seventeen verses of Heb 12 and recommence in Heb 12:28–13:17. Throughout Heb 12:1–17, the author prods the audience to keep going, to keep making progress. In 12:28–13:17, the author exhorts the audience to take up practices that exhibit their concern for the community and their fidelity to God. On the whole, the persistent hortatory tone in the surrounding verses accents the particular shape of language and use of imagery in Heb 12:18–29, highlighting it as a distinctive moment in Heb 12. With the exception of the single imperative (βλέπετε) in 12:25, the author shifts from exhortation to exposition[13] with the turn to the indicative

[12] Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship between Form and Meaning* (LNTS 297; London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005) suggests that διό and the presence of two hortatory subjunctives in Heb 12:28 indicate the hinge function of Heb 12:28–29. She suggests a three-part division to Hebrews, and finds in the third part (10:19–13:25) three other hinge passages (10:19–25; 12:1–2; 13:13–15) characterized by the presence of hortatory subjunctives. She explains, "The hortatory subjunctives conclude the preceding unity and provide the point of departure for the following unit" (242). Speaking of Hebrews 12:18–29, she says, "The conclusion to the unity (12:1–27) is signaled by διό (therefore) in v. 28. The author summarizes how the preceding co-text grounds the hortatory subjunctives with a participial phrase: διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες...The present participle depicts the reception of the kingdom as an ongoing action and the basis for the following two hortatory subjunctives. Not only is there a shift from the indicative to the hortatory subjunctive, but there is also a significant temporal shift from the past/future contrast in vv. 25–27 to the temporal present" (270).

[13] The alternation between exhortation and exposition is notable feature of Hebrews' structure. See the discussion in Frank J. Matera, "Moral Exhortation: The Relation Between Moral Exhortation and Doctrinal Exposition in the Letter to the Hebrews," *TJT* (1994): 169-182. See also David Alan Black, "The Problem of the Literary Structure of Hebrews: An Evaluation and a Proposal," *GTJ* (1968): 163–77, who notes the earlier

(προσεληλύθατε) in 12:18 and back to imperative in 12:28. On the basis of what precedes and what follows, Heb 12:18–29 thus appears *both* to intrude upon the author's persistent hortatory tone in the preceding and following verses *and* to relate to them. In this sense, then, it is appropriate to speak of Heb 12:18–29 as a distinct but embedded moment in its literary context.

Previous Approaches to Hebrews 12:18–29

My analysis of Heb 12:18–29 sketches and anticipates the larger task of this dissertation: to explore the style and function of these verses as well as their place in the literary context of Heb 12–13 and within the larger argument of Hebrews. My initial reading focuses not just on the ideas underlying the passage, but especially on the particular way in which they have been presented or expressed. By calling attention to aspects like word choice, the arrangement of sentences, and the aural character of the language, I have stressed in a curory fashion those aspects of the passage typically analyzed in ancient discussions of style in literary and rhetorical treatises ancient analysis of style. In addition to these features of the passage, the use of imagery, the emotional response fostered by these verses, and the role of the imagination also highlight avenues for comparative analysis with these ancient discussions.

Because I will focus on the stylistic features and function of Heb 12:18–29 and its place within its literary context, the dissertation stands against two distinct streams of scholarship on the passage. First, while scholars frequently discuss this passage in relationship to the author's cultural, religious, and intellectual milieu, few monographs or dissertations have attended to the stylistic shape of these verses themselves.[14] Second,

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suggestions of Kümmel and Nauck on the alternation between exhortation and exposition in Hebrews.

[14] I am aware of only a few dissertations that relate to this passage: Juliana M. Casey, "Eschatology in Hebrews 12:14–29: An Exegetical Study," (PhD diss., Catholic University of Leuven, 1977); Thomas Wiley Lewis, III, "The Theological Logic in Hebrews 10:19–12:29 and the Appropriation of the Old Testament," (Ph.D. Thesis, Drew University; and most recently, Michael H. Kibbe, "Godly Fear or Ungodly Failure? Hebrews 12:18–29 and the Sinai Theophanies," (Ph.D., Wheaton College, 2014). Casey's two-volume work

those scholars who do attend to the style of Heb 12:18–29 often undervalue the importance of its stylistic features. Typically viewed as little more than "ornamentation," previous contributions fail to account for the intended effects of these features and how they may have affected the audience's experience of the passage.

Interpretations Based on Cultural Context

Given the strange place of Heb 12:18–29 in its context, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been an overriding focus on the content of this passage with little attention to its forms of expression and its connection to the surrounding exhortations. That is to say, the ideas are analyzed, but not the rhetorical and stylistic shape of the passage.

Some scholars search for the meaning of these verses in the larger religious and cultural milieu. The variety of suggestions is staggering: interpreters have found in these verses evidence of the author's similarity to (if not dependence upon) Middle Platonism,[15] Philo of Alexandria,[16] Jewish-Christian Gnosticism,[17] Jewish mysticism,[18] Jewish apocalypticism,[19] and the theology found in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[20] Other studies

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approaches 700 pages in length; it reads more like a commentary than a focused monograph, often moving from Heb 12:18–29 to consider themes and motifs found elsewhere in Hebrews. Lewis devotes only one page to the exposition of these verses. Kibbe's dissertation attempts to deal with the author's apparently negative reading of the Sinai tradition from Exodus and Deuteronomy. Notable articles on the passage are often focused on a single lexeme or single verse, e.g. Ceslas Spicq, "La Panégyrie de *Hébr.* xii,22," *ST* (1953): 30–38; E.C. Selwyn, "On ΨΗΛΑΦΩΜΕΝΩ in Heb xii.18," *JTS* (1910): 133–134; Joseph Lécuyer, "Ecclesia Primitivorum (Hébr. 12,23)," *AnBib* (1961): 161–168; Gene Smillie, "'The One Who is Speaking' in Hebrews 12:25," *TynBul* (2004): 275–294; W.J. Dumbrell, "The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect," *EvQ* (1976): 154–159. More substantive articles will be discussed below.

[15] E.g., James Thompson, "The Eschatology of Hebrews: A Study of 12:18–29," in *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982) 41–52.

[16] E.g., Herbert Braun, "Das Himmlische Vaterland bei Philo und im Hebräerbrief," in *Verborum Veritas: Festschrift für Gustav Stählin zum 70 Geburtstag* (ed. Otto Böcher and Klaus Haacker; Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag Rolf Brockhaus, 1970) 319–327.

[17] E.g., Ernst Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God: An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews* (trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Irving L. Sanderg; Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1984).

[18] E.g., Jody A. Barnard, *The Mysticism of Hebrews* (WUNT 331; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 208–11.

[19] E.g., Casey, "Eschatology,". Cf. Aelred Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Achievement of Salvation in the Epistle's Perspectives* (St. Meinard, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1960), who characterizes Heb 12:22–24 as an indicator that Hebrews combines apocalyptic and Platonic/Philonic thought: "The Epistle to the Hebrews has taken the *Jewish concept* of the correspondence between the earthly sanctuary and heaven and mingled it with the *Alexandrian concept* of transient earthly shadows and eternal heavenly reality to reach its theology of salvation perfected in the work of Christ. Heaven is the place of God's real dwelling in majesty (8.1) and of man's perfect and eternal union with God (12.22–24)" (189).

[20] E.g., Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study*

attempt to locate this passage within biblical and post-biblical speculation on the relationship between Sinai, Zion, and Jerusalem.[21] Many of these studies offer limited insight into how Heb 12:18–29 relates to the surrounding verses, especially the exhortations the precede and follow. Instead, the focus is on how words, ideas, or themes—extracted from the passage and its literary context—relate to other cultural or religious phenomena. Consequently, these studies suggest that the a significant portion of semantic and functional significance of Heb 12:18–29 lies not in the placement of these verses in the literary context nor in their particular use of language, but in a world of ideas that exists beyond or outside of the text of Hebrews.

Symbolic and Theological Interpretations

A second approach to Heb 12:18–29 aligns it more closely with the composition's larger themes and motifs, but also offers little explanation for how these verses relate to the surrounding exhortations. As early as John Chrysostom,[22] the comparison of the two mountains in Heb 12:18–24 functions as a contrast between the old covenant and the new. In one form of this interpretation, the visible mountain signifies the relentless and terrifying nature of the law, while Mount Zion indicates the joyful grace of Christ. The visible mountain thus signifies God's unsurpassable distance, while the images associated with Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem signify the Christian's unencumbered and joyful

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in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 88–99. "The fact that typical correspondences with the Qumran texts are to be found in other details of Heb xii. 22ff is further evidence of the undeniable proximity of the New Testament and Qumran in this temple symbolism" (98).

[21] E.g., G. Fohrer and E. Lohse, "Σιών κτλ.," *TDNT* 9:292–338; Antonin Cause, "De la Jérusalem terrestre à la Jérusalem céleste," *RHPR* (1947): 12–36; Norman W. Porteous, "Jerusalem-Zion: The Growth of a Symbol," in *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.: Festschrift für Wilhelm Rudolf* (ed. Arnulf Kuschke; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1961) 235–252; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Biblical Concept of Jerusalem," *JES* (1971): 300–316.

[22] See *Hom. Heb.* 32: Referring to the string of modifiers in 12:18–19, he says: "It seems to me that by these words he hints at the obscurity of the Old [Testament], and the overshadowed and veiled character of the Law" (NPNF 1.14). Many subsequent interpreters follow this interpretation, emphasizing the gracious presence and action of Jesus in contrast to the fearful prospect of the law. See, e.g., Leo the Great, "Sermon XCV: Sermon on the Beatitudes, St. Matt v.1–9," in NPNF 2.12:202–10; Thomas Aquinas, ST III, Q 44, A4, ad. 3. Not surprisingly, Martin Luther brings this interpretation to bear in much of his writing. See *LW* 9:57–58 (on Deut 4:11) and *LW* 26:319–20 (on Gal 3:19ff.).

access to God.

Though this is a traditional approach to this passage,[23] it has real problems. As earlier and subsequent verses make clear, an encounter with the living God is still deemed to be a terrifying phenomenon (cf. Heb 10:31), even for those under the new covenant. The audience faces an even more certain (πολὺ μᾶλλον) punishment (12:25) than the previous hearers and the God to whom they draw near remains a "consuming fire" (12:29). If Heb 12:18–24 contrasts the terrifying exclusion from God under the old covenant with the joyful inclusion under the new, the effect of such a comparison lasts only until the jolting warning found in the verses that follow immediately (12:25–29).

Ethical and Spiritual Interpretations

A third approach to Heb 12:18–29 emphasizes the contrast between earthly and heavenly realities, not the nature of the two covenants. For Clement of Alexandria and Origen, reference to the "heavenly Jerusalem" refers to Christians' ultimate and definitive identity as those who have been enrolled as citizens of heaven.[24] This interpretation emphasizes that the audience's social identity markers (i.e. citizenship, membership in the *ekklesia*) have their origin in heaven, even if similar markers are absent in their earthly situation. For Origen, the heavenly Jerusalem carries with it an ethical valence as Christians "build" Jerusalem in their hearts[25] and strive to "dwell" in Jerusalem by following the way of peace.[26] Similarly, the two mountains and the different elements of the heavenly

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[23] See, e.g., F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990 [1963]), 354: "Those who wholeheartedly believe the gospel and gladly embrace its privileges need have no fear; they are urged to enter the heavenly sanctuary with full confidence through the blood of Jesus." Similarly William L. Lane, *Hebrews* (2 vols.; WBC 47a, b; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1991), 2:489: "Sinai and Zion are extended metaphors for the qualitatively different encounters with God under the old covenant and the new covenant, respectively." Casey's discussion argues vigorously for the traditional view, going so far as to claim that the author of Hebrews represents Sinai as a "non-encounter" with God (Casey, "Eschatology," 2:303–83).

[24] Cf. Phil 3:20. In several patristic authors, reference to Heb 12:22–24 often appears in conjunction with other texts denoting a Christian's heavenly origin and citizenship. Typical texts include Phil 3:20 and 4:26. Although πολίτευμα does not occur in Heb 12:22–24, several patristic interpreters write as if this idea were implicit to these verses.

[25] Origen, *Hom. Josh.* 21.2.

[26] Origen, *Comm. Rom.* 3.5.2.

Jerusalem in Heb 12:22–24 signify stages in Christian progress. Accordingly, the audience's present earthly existence becomes the training ground for moral and spiritual formation by which Christians are prepared for their heavenly existence.[27] The ethical and spiritual readings of these verses do a better job of aligning the passage more closely with the earlier parts of Heb 12. In Heb 12:1–13, the audience is exhorted to endure earthly hardships, which are depicted as a form of God's *paideia*.[28] The ethical and spiritual readings of Heb 12:18–24 draw an implicit connection between the exhortations in Heb 12:1–17 and the images in Heb 12:18–24.[29]

Attending to God's Speech

Ernst Käsemann offers a fourth approach, which although also concept-driven, correctly calls attention to the importance of God's speech in the verses.[30] Though he provides little close literary or rhetorical analysis, textual markers do support Käsemann's conclusion. As my initial reading makes clear, it is worth noting that these verses revolve around God's speech *and* human response to that speech.[31] In this regard, the sensible mountain of Heb 12:18–21 and the invisible Mt. Zion of Heb 12:22–24 provide a generative contrast. As I noted above, this contrast concerns the two locations of God's speech and the different human dispositions to that speech.

All of the above approaches are valuable, but they are driven by an attempt to use

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[27] See, e.g. Origen, *Hom. Num.* 3.3.3–4.

[28] On the nature of God's *paideia* in Heb 12, see N. Clayton Croy, *Endurance in Suffering Hebrews 12:1-13 in its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[29] See also Thompson, "Eschatology of Hebrews." He offers a variant on the third approach. He argues that the contrast between earthly and heavenly realities does not concern the identity or destination of Christians, but rather the *ontological* contrast between heaven and earth. The contrast in vv. 18–24, then, aligns with the broad metaphysical assumptions of Middle Platonism that denigrate visible, phenomenal realities in favor of the invisible, noumenal realities. In contrast to the above interpretation that required a rigid break between vv. 24 and 25, Thompson discerns at least a partial connection between the visible vs. invisible in Heb 12:18–24 and the shakeable vs. unshakable in Heb 12:25–27.

[30] Käsemann, *Wandering People*, 50–52, 186.

[31] See, e.g. the repetition of words or concepts in each of these verses make this more apparent: παραιτέομαι in 12:19 and 12:25 (*bis*); φωνή in 12:19 and 12:26; οἱ ἀκούσαντες in 12:19 and οἱ ἐκεῖνοι in 12:25; τὸ διαστελλόμενον in 12:19 and τὸν χρηματίζοντα in 12:25; λόγον in 12:19 and λαλοῦντι/τὸν λαλοῦντα in 12:24–25.

cultural or religious motifs to account for the signficance of Heb 12:18–29, while neglecting the particular forms of language that express these motifs and concepts. Even the studies that do attend to the style of this passage remain underdeveloped.[32] They typically result from a superficial analysis of the nature and effect of these stylistic features, focusing instead on the concepts or ideas that can be abstracted from them.

Accounting for the Verbal Artistry of Hebrews 12:18–29

Although studies focusing on the stylistic and rhetorical characteristics of Hebrews have increased steadily in the last half-century, Heb 12:18–29 has generally been neglected. Consequently, in this section I provide a broad overview of previous considerations of the style of Hebrews as well as a brief survey of rhetorical-critical analyses of Hebrews.

Ancient Views of the Style of Hebrews

Some of the first interpreters of Hebrews drew attention to its unique style in order to identify the author. Clement of Alexandria thought that Paul was the author of Hebrews but had written the epistle in Hebrew; Luke then translated the epistle into Greek, which explains similarities in the "style of expression" (ἑρμηνεία) in Hebrews and Acts.[33] Likewise, Origen took note of the distinct style of Hebrews, especially compared to the rather different style of Paul. He admits that the "character of style" (ὁ χαρακτὴρ τῆς λέξεως) of Hebrews differs significantly from the "untrained style of speech" (τὸ ἐν λόγῳ ἰδιωτικὸν)

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[32] See Casey, "Eschatology;" Juliana M. Casey, "Christian Assembly in Hebrews: A Fantasy Island?," *TD* (1982): 323–335; Peter R. Jones, "A Superior Life: Hebrews 12:3–13:25," *RevExp* (1985): 391–405; Peter R. Jones, "A Superior Life: Hebrews 12:3–13:25," *RevExp* (1985): 391–405; Mackie, "Heavenly Sanctuary Mysticism;" Victor (Sung-Yui) Ree, "Chiasm and the Concept of Faith in Hebrews 12:1–29," *WTJ* (2001): 269–284. In "Christian Assembly," Casey makes several important observations about the use of language in Hebrews, especially its vivid imagery. Mackie, drawing on discussion of ἔκφρασις and ἐνάργεια in ancient rhetorical handbooks, also calls attention to the visual program of Hebrews. His concern for the "vividness" of the imagery in Hebrews applies almost exclusively to descriptions of heavenly realities, however. Jones likens Heb 12:18–24 to a "poem to be savored for its imagery and feeling tones and atmospherics" and praises its "haunting, mystical, and unique apocalyptic" account of Christian worship (Jones, "Superior Life," 396). His judgment, however, is based on ideas present in the passage with little attention to their form. Ree's analysis of Heb 12 suggests a chiastic structure to the chapter that depends more on conceptual analysis (i.e. the "concept" of faith) than on textual analysis.

[33] *Apud* Eusebius, *E.H.* 6.14.2 (*NPNF* 2.1). Greek text from Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History, Volume 2* (trans. J.E.L. Oulton; LCL 265; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1932).

in Paul. Origen bases this judgment on the particular diction (ἡ φράσις) and word arrangement (σύνθεσις τῆς λέξεως) of the epistle.[34]

Both Clement and Origen use terminology found in ancient rhetorical and literary handbooks to assess the particular style of Hebrews.[35] If nothing else, the comments of Clement and Origen accentuate the importance of attending to the style of Hebrews. In the ancient analysis of style, questions about diction and word arrangement, as well as other components of style, related to fundamental questions concerning the function of a passage or composition.

Modern Interpreters and the the Style of Hebrews

Modern interpreters, following the lead of Clement and Origen, have long recognized the distinctive style and literary features of Hebrews, especially in comparison to the other NT compositions.[36] But, as David Alan Black notes, "serious study of Hebrews has to a great degree only paid lip service to the literary artistry in the letter,"[37] an observation supported by the brief survey above.

(i) Discussion of Style in Commentaries

While many modern commentators restate the judgments of Clement and Origen on the distinctive style of Hebrews, they offer little additional consideration of the stylistic features of the epistle or their intended effects.[38] When commentaries do discuss the style

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[34] *Apud* Eusebius, *E.H.* 6.25.11–13 (*NPNF* 2.1).

[35] For Origen, see John A. McGuckin, "Origen as Literary Critic in the Alexandrian Tradition," in *Origeniana Octava* (ed. L. Perrone; Leuven: Peeters, 2003) 121–135; Peter William Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life* (OECS; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41–66; Bernard Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe* (2 vols.; 18/1–2; Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1987), 1:202–46, esp. 245–46. Neuschäfer emphasizes Origen's use of technical terms, and the need to locate them within their appropriate philosophical milieu. For example, he notes that φράσις is a Stoic term, which is basically equivalent to the Peripatetic term, λέξις (2:464n748). He notes as well that the notion of different "characters" (χαρακτήρ) of style have their origin in Theophrastus (2:465n751).

[36] See, e.g. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient Near East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. Lionel R.M. Strachan; rev. ed. New York: George H. Doran, 1927) 243–44; Eduard Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1956) 386.

[37] David Alan Black, "Literary Artistry in the Epistle to the Hebrews," *FilolNT* (1994): 43.

[38] See, e.g., the commentaries of Attridge, Delitzsch, deSilva, Grässer, Koester, Lane, Spicq, H.-F. Weiss, Windisch *ad locum*.

of Hebrews, there are four common approaches: (1) those emphasizing the distinctiveness of Hebrews compared to the other NT writings; (2) those that discuss style in a section dealing with the genre of Hebrews;[39] (3) those that treat style as ancillary to considerations of the structure of Hebrews;[40] and, (4) the treatments in the few commentaries that devote more attention to the style of Hebrews.[41] Typically, those commentaries that do devote more attention to the style of Hebrews tend to enumerate the stylistic devices found in Hebrews with little developed analysis, giving the impression that the stylistic devices in Hebrews are a matter of ornamentation not central to the argument or overall function of Hebrews.[42]

Other commentaries provide more extensive discussion of the form and style of Hebrews.[43] The commentary of Ceslas Spicq is exemplary for many reasons. Like other interpreters, he emphasizes the superiority of Hebrews' style to that of other NT compositions[44] and compares Hebrews especially with the writings of Paul.[45] He too observes the frequent use of stylistic devices and rhetorical figures in Hebrews as well as

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[39] Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (12th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966 [1936]), 23–26.

[40] Erich Grässer, *An die Hebräer* (3 vols.; EKK; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Zürich; Neukirchen, 1990), 28; Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 31.

[41] For a distillation of the discussions in the above commentaries, see Andrew H. Trotter, Jr., "Style," in *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1997) 163–184

[42] Attridge provides nearly two pages listing the stylistic features of Hebrews (*Hebrews*, 20–21), which he says resemble "the characteristics of Hellenistic rhetorical *embellishment*" (20, emphasis added). Likewise, he notes how Hebrews is "*ornamented* with an abundance of rhetorical figures" (20, emphasis added) and how metaphors "*ornament* the discourse" (21, emphasis added). Throughout, one suspects that these "surface textures" (21) are ancillary to the object and message of the epistle (e.g. Attridge begins a new section, "The Aim and Message of Hebrews," only *after* he has discussed the language and style of Hebrews, 21). See, similarly David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 43. Koester, *Hebrews*, 92–96, omits consideration of style from the section discussing "Rhetorical Strategy." See similarly, Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21–22. Having noted the stylistic features of Hebrews, he downplays their functional significance: "But these merely illustrate the rhetorical skill which has gone into the whole composition so as to achieve the object of persuading the readers to change their minds" (22).

[43] See especially, Lane, *Hebrews*; Moffatt, *Hebrews*; Spicq, *Hébreux*.

[44] "La langue de *Hébr.* est littéraire et même classique, la meilleure de tout le Nouveau Testament" (Spicq, *Hébreux*, 1:152). In addition to verdict of Origen, he also notes the similar sentiments of Thomas Aquinas and Erasmus (1:153).

[45] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 1:152–53.

the more elevated style of the epistle.[46] More than listing the stylistic and rhetorical devices employed in Hebrews, however, Spicq makes several important observations about the *effects* of the style of Hebrews. For example, he calls attention to the way that the style of Hebrews appeals to the emotions of the audience.[47] Further, he insists upon the close relationship between the composition's literary and stylistic sophistication and its theological vision.[48] Spicq sees more clearly than many interpreters how the alignment of content and style lend to Hebrews its effective strength and power.[49]

(ii) Discussions of Style in Articles and Monographs

Articles and monographs dedicated to evaluations of the style of Hebrews follow the tendencies of commentaries noted above. Several works discuss stylistic devices throughout Hebrews, but do so in a way that resembles the enumeration approach of many commentaries.[50] Other studies, however, focus attention on one specific aspect of Hebrews' style, such as its rhythmic structure,[51] its distinctive vocabulary,[52] or its prominent use of particular stylistic devices.[53]

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[46] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 1:361.

[47] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 1:358.

[48] *Spicq, Hébreux*, 1:366: “S'il abonde en finesses littéraires, elles ne sont jamais artificielles; la profondeur et la rigueur des idées l'emportent sur les raffinments du style; celui-ci est l'expression toujours heureuse de celles-là; l'art n'intervient que pour donner à la pensée une force et une séduction plus vives.”

[49] Similar to Spicq, *Lane, Hebrews* suggests that the effectiveness of Hebrews depends on *both* its patterns of argumentation *and* its style. According to him, the author of Hebrews "understood speech as a means and medium of power" (l). What is more, he says, the "forceful and artistic prose" of Hebrews "provides the vehicle for the tenor of the argument" (lxxvi). Finally, he concludes that Hebrews "provides constant illustration of the *power* in the *artistic implementation* of language" (lxxvii). Unlike other commentators who view the style of Hebrews as mere decoration, Lane suggests that the effectiveness of Hebrews depends on *both* its patterns of argumentation *and* its style.

[50] See, e.g. Black, "Literary Artistry;" A.M. Vitti, "La Bellezze Stilistische della Lettera agli Ebrei," *Bib* (1936): 137–166; David Gonzalo Maeso, "Lengua Original, Autor, y Estilo de la Epistola a los Hebreos," *CB* (1956): 202–215. Both Vitti and Maeso make passing references to the sublime. See, e.g. Maeso: "...por su estilo es una magnífica pieza oratoria de altos vuelos, en que la sublimidad de la materia tratada se acompasa con el ritmo sostenido y ardoroso de una elocución enérgica, flúida y de armoniosos perfiles" (214).

[51] Friedrich Blass, "Die rhythmische Komposition des Hebräerbriefes," *TSK* (1902): 420–461; Friedrich Blass, *(Barnabas) Brief an die Hebräer: Text mit Angabe der Rhythmen* (Halle a.d.S.: Niemeyer, 1903). See also the discussion in *Spicq, Hébreux*, 1:359–61.

[52] Frederic Gardiner, "The Language of the Epistle to the Hebrews as Bearing upon Its Authorship," *JBL* (1887): 1–25.

[53] Amplification: Thomas H. Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; JSNT Supp. 90; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1993) 375–387. Synkrisis: Christopher F. Evans, *The Theology of*

(iii) Walter Jennrich

To date, the most thorough attempt to deal comprehensively with the style of Hebrews can be found in the 1947 dissertation of Walter Jennrich.[54] Employing a standard of criticism he derives from Dionysius of Halicarnassus' essay *De Isocrate* with Isocrates' *Aegineticus* as a point of comparison, Jennrich evaluates the style of Romans and Hebrews. Jennrich's approach has two virtues.[55] First, his analysis of the style of Hebrews and Romans on the basis of the standards of Dionysius provides a *focused* comparative analysis. Second, by centering his investigation on the critical perspective of Dionysius, he is able to evaluate Romans and Hebrews by the "canons of criticism" similar to those "by which ancient literature was judged."[56] It is important to note that the focus for Dionysius is on the *evaluation* of speeches, not on their *creation* (as it is for many rhetorical handbooks from

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Rhetoric: The Epistle to the Hebrews (Friends of Dr. William's Library 42; London: Dr. William's Trust, 1988); Timothy Wayne Seid, "The Rhetorical Form of the Melchizedek/Christ Comparison in Hebrews 7," (PhD diss., Brown University, 1996); Michael W Martin and Jason A Whitlark, "The Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis as the Key to the Structure and Argument of Hebrews," *NTS* (2011): 415-439; Michael W Martin and Jason A Whitlark, "Choosing What Is Advantageous: The Relationship between Epideictic and Deliberative Syncrisis in Hebrews," *NTS* (2012): 379-400. Antithesis: Harold W. Attridge, "The Use of Antithesis in Hebrews 8–10," in *Christians Among Jews and Gentiles: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. George W. Nickelsburg and George W. MacRae; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 1–9. Rhetorical Questions: Bruce R. Moore, "Rhetorical Questions in Second Corinthians and in Ephesians through Revelation," *Notes* (1983): 3–33. Paronomasia: Karen H. Jobes, "The Function of Paronomasia in Hebrews 10:5–7," *TJ* (1992): 181–191. Michael R. Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11: In Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988) provides an entire chapter discussing the use of anaphora in Heb 11, but discusses several other stylistic devices as well. In addition to Albert Vanhoye, *La Structure Littéraire de L'Épître aux Hébreux* (StudNeot 1; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963), several scholars have also given attention to the use of chiasm: John Bligh, *Chiastic Analysis of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Heythrop College, England: Atheneaum, 1966); Daniel J. Ebert, IV, "The Chiastic Structure of the Prologue to Hebrews," *TJ* (1992): 163–179; Estella B. Horning, "Chiasmus, Creedal Structure, and Christology in Hebrews 12:1–2," *BR* (1978): 37–48; Ree, "Chiasm and Faith;" George E. Rice, "The Chiastic Structure of the Central Section of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *AUSS* (1981): 243–246. Note that discerning chiastic structure retains a subjective element, as demonstrated by the divergent conclusions of Vanhoye and Bligh on the nature of chiasm in Hebrews (see Rice, "Chiastic Structure," 244).

[54] Walter Albert Jennrich, "Rhetorical Style in the New Testament: Romans and Hebrews," (PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 1947). For a distillation of his dissertation, see Walter A. Jennrich, "Rhetoric in the New Testament: The Diction in Romans and Hebrews," *CTM* (1949): 518–31.

[55] Jennrich's dissertation is not without its shortcomings, however. Most obviously, his dissertation attempts to cover too much ground in a single volume. On the whole, his observations about Hebrews come in the form of relatively superficial observations or qualitative figures that lack sustained exegetical analysis. While Jennrich's descriptive enumeration of stylistic features in Hebrews is helpful and suggestive, it could be improved by means of more careful consideration of individual passages in Hebrews.

[56] Jennrich, "Rhetorical Style," 10.

antiquity).[57]

Jennrich also makes some suggestive observations about how Longinus's treatise *De Sublimitate* may assist in the analysis of the style of Hebrews. In particular, he draws on insights from *De Sublimitate* to consider how the particular style of Hebrews may have affected the audience's experience of the composition. The author of Hebrews, he says, has combined the "manifold tones of his composition" so that he brings

> into the hearts of the readers his own actual emotions so that all who read him share it. "By piling phrase on phrase, he builds up one majestic whole and casts a spell on the reader and turn his thoughts toward what is majestic and dignified and sublime and finally wins complete mastery over his heart and soul."[58]

Though not fully developed, Jennrich suggests a similarity between what Hebrews *does* and the intended effects of ὕψος as outlined in *De Sublimitate*.[59]

(iv) Michael Cosby

Michael Cosby's dissertation, published some forty years after Jennrich's, marks a significant advance in the analysis of the style of Hebrews. Whereas Jennrich discussed the overall style of *both* Hebrews *and* Romans, Cosby provides a much more focused investigation of the rhetorical composition of Hebrews 11. Cosby attends to the effectiveness of figures of speech and figures of thought in Hebrews.[60] Compared to many commentaries, Cosby emphasizes the central and *effective* role of these devices in carrying out Hebrews' rhetorical program: "In a highly efficient manner the author implements this

[57] Put in slightly more modern terms, the approach of Dionysius (and Jennrich) is more concerned with the intendend *effects* of speech and writing than with the *intention* of the speaker or author. In contrast, there is a general tendency to use rhetorical theory as a veiled form of authorial intention. See, e.g. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation* "Rhetorical criticism takes the text as we have it, whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and looks at it from the point of view of the author's or editor's *intent*, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries" (4, emphasis added).

[58] Jennrich, "Rhetorical Style," 182. NB: Jennrich does not properly cite the reference to *Subl.* 39.1. Whether or not this omission was intentional, it is not the only instance where he borrows from Longinus without indicating that he is doing so (see his discussion of ecstasy vs. persuasion on p. 169, which resembles *Subl.* 1.4).

[59] Throughout his dissertation, Jennrich explicitly mentions *De Sublimitate* some sixteen times. As mentioned above, Jennrich typically relegates the treatise behind the critical positions of Dionysius and Aristotle. He draws more forcibly from the treatise in his concluding chapter, but does so without sustained engagement with the treatise itself (or, at times, proper citation of it).

[60] Specifically, he discusses the figures of paromoiosis, parallelism, paranomasia, anaphora, rhetorical questions, asyndeton, isocolon, comma, antithesis, hyperbole, metaphor, circumlocutions, and antonomasia.

series of rhetorical techniques in Hebrews 11 to persuade his audience to stand firm in their Christian commitment."[61] For Cosby, the forms of language used in Heb 11 plays a vital role in its argumentative purpose; the style and content, in other words, are closely aligned and assist the author in persuading the audience to respond in a particular way.

The Epistle to the Hebrews and Ancient Rhetorical Theory

The analyses of Jennrich and Cosby challenge the notion that matters of style in Hebrews concern mere ornamentation or embellishment. Rather, both Jennrich and Cosby call attention to the role that peculiar features of style play in the overall function of Hebrews. In addition, the approaches of Cosby and Jennrich represent two approaches for assessing the *nature* of Hebrews' style. Both Jennrich and Cosby turn to ancient theory to locate and appreciate the nature of Hebrews' style, but they turn to different critical theories. As a result, the two projects differ in part with regard to their understanding of the function or end of Hebrews' style. For Cosby, the style of Hebrews ultimately leads to persuasion;[62] for Jennrich, the style of Hebrews somehow moves beyond persuasion. The difference between Cosby and Jennrich recalls Lausberg's distinction between the orator and poet in antiquity mentioned in the introduction. Cosby sees the author of Hebrews primarily as an orator. Jennrich, in contrast, likens the author more to an artist who crafts magnificent and soul-stirring vistas of reality.[63]

Lausberg's view of the orator and the poet provide a helpful heuristic for organizing two different understandings of what Heb 12:18–29 *does*. As should be clear already, a majority of interpretations, supposing that this passage concerns the nature of the two

[61] Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition*, 3; for similar sentiments, see 4–6, 24, 27, 84, 85, 88, 90. NB: Cosby speaks of the use of figures as "rhetorical devices" or "rhetorical techniques" throughout his dissertation. In the rhetorical handbooks that he cites, however, the use of these techniques or figures is found often in discussions of style.

[62] Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition*, 24.

[63] See, e.g. "...the brilliance of effect which the writer achieves with his brush" (Jennrich, "Rhetorical Style," 183) and "We can only compare the epistle to a painting of perfect beauty..." (184). Jennrich's understanding of the power of the style of Hebrews is based in part on his reading of *De Sublimitate*. He emphasizes the ability of Hebrews to stir "myriad ideas" in the hearer, its "sublimity of thought," its "effects on the emotion," and the "immense sublimity" of its theme (Jennrich, "Rhetorical Style," 182–183).

covenants, suggest that Heb 12:18–29 aligns with the author's attempt to *persuade* the audience to accept the superiority of Christianity to Judaism. In this reading, the comparison of the two mountains functions as argumentative proof of the superiority of the new covenant. Greater attention to these verses as mimetic artistry, however, views the author of Hebrews more as a poet than as an orator; the function of these verses, then, would not be to convince the audience of something distilled from them, but to present them with a compelling and imaginative view of reality and the place where they hear and respond to God's word.

Many studies interested in the rhetorical features of Hebrews align with Cosby's emphasis on their persuasive rather than their mimetic function.[64] Although Cosby affords the stylistic elements of Hebrews a decisive place in the overall rhetorical effectiveness of Hebrews, many rhetorical-critical interpretations of Hebrews do not consider the function and effect of style.[65] Rather, the majority of rhetorical-critical approaches to Hebrews have focused on another topic in the ancient handbooks, arrangement. Attempts to decipher the

[64] By the middle of the 20th century, most interpreters of Hebrews had come to think of Hebrews as a homily or sermon, which led to more attempts to interpret it on the basis of ancient rhetorical theory. See, e.g. Hartwig Thyen, *Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955); James Swetnam, "On the Literary Genre of the 'Epistle' to the Hebrews," *NovT* (1969): 261–69; Lawrence Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity," *HTR* (1984): 277-299; Harold W Attridge, "Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος παρακλήσεως): The Possible Location of, and Socialization in, the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Semeia* (1990): 211-226. Most recently this view has been put forward by Gelardini with additional precision on the hypothetical setting of the sermon; see Gabriella Gelardini, "Hebrews, An Ancient Synagogue Homily for *Tisha Be-Av*: Its Function, Its Basis, Its Theological Interpretation," in *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods—New Insights* (ed. Gabriella Gelardini; BibInt 75; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005) 107–124. Some recent interpreters continue to view Hebrews as a theological treatise, not a sermon. See, e.g. Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (2 vols.; Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), 2:272–76; Pamela A Eisenbaum, "Locating Hebrews within the Literary Landscape of Christian Origins," in *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods—New Insights* (ed. Gabriella Gelardini; BibInt 75; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005) 213–237. Jonathan M. Isaak, "Situating the 'Letter to the Hebrews' in Early Christian History," (PhD diss., McGill University, 1999) suggests that Hebrews be compared to the literary works of later patristic authors like Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian; consequently, Hebrews does not have a specific audience in mind, but writes to address general theological concerns that faced Christians at the time.

[65] For an overview of rhetorical criticism of Hebrews, see Duane F Watson, "Rhetorical Criticism of Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles since 1978," *CurBS* (1997): 175-207, especially 181–87. The influence of Kennedy's method, and his dismissal of style, is apparent in many studies. See, e.g. C. Clifton Black, "The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills," *HTR* (1988): 1-18; Olbricht, "Hebrews as Amplification."

structure of Hebrews abound,[66] but they all share a common assumption that in order to understand the function of Hebrews, one must first identify its respective parts. Although the various attempts to outline the literary or rhetorical structure of Hebrews are not without exegetical value, they often feel forced or artificial.[67] Even more significantly, however, these approaches to the structure of Hebrews insist that the effectiveness of Hebrews, especially its ability to persuade the audience to reach certain conclusions, depends significantly on formal elements of arrangement found in ancient handbooks.

Hebrews and the Limits of Persuasion

In addition to overemphasizing the importance of rhetorical arrangement, many

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[66] For an overview, see Black, "Problem;" David J. Macleod, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Hebrews," *BSac* (1989): 185–197; Steve Stanley, "The Structure of Hebrews from Three Perspectives," *TynBul* (1994): 245–271; J. Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 1–6," *Bib* (1972): 368–385; J. Swetnam, "Form and Content in Hebrews 7–13," *Bib* (1974): 333–348; Albert Vanhoye, "Discussions sur la Structure de L'Épître aux Hébreux," *Bib* (1974): 349–380.

Von Soden proposed an understanding of the structure of Hebrews on the basis of ancient rhetorical theory. See *Hermann von Soden, Hebräerbrief, Briefe des Petrus, Jakobus, Judas (HKNT 3.2; 3d rev. and augmented ed. Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1899).* He explains the structure of Hebrews with terms adopted from ancient theory: "Der darnach sich ergebende Aufbau des Briefs entspricht völlig den Gesetzen der antiken Rhetorik. Seine einzelnen Theile lassen sich zutreffend charakterisieren mit den terminis, durch welche die Meister derselben die Abschnitte einer regelrechten Rede mit praktischen Zwecken bezeichnen...: 1.1–4.13 προοιμιον πρὸς εὔνοιαν mit Gewinnung der πρόθεσις, 4.14–6.20 διήγησις πρὸς πιθανότητα, 7.1–10.18 ἀπόδειξις πρὸς πειθώ, 10.19–13.221 ἐπίλογος, die praktischen Forderungen ziehend und für sie gewinnend" (11).

Not all considerations of the structure have been based on ancient rhetorical theory. See R. Gyllenberg, "Die Komposition des Hebräerbriefs," *SEA* (1957–1958): 22–23, 137–147; F. Thien, "Analyse de l'Épître aux Hébreux," *RB* (1902): 74–86; Leon Vaganay, "Le Plan de l'Épître aux Hébreux," in *Mémorial Lagrange* (ed. Ecole biblique et archéologique française; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1940) 269–277; and especially Vanhoye, *La Structure*. Vanhoye rejected the proposal of von Soden, since it appeared to him as "un schéma littéraire *préfabriqué*," which had been forced onto the text of Hebrews. He rejects the suggestion of von Soden because "...il est évident que la culture grecque, chez l'auteur de Héb., est restée sous l'emprise de la tradition hébraïque; loin de la dominer, elle s'est mise à son service" (*Vanhoye, La Structure*, 16). For a distillation and evaluation of Vanhoye's structural analysis, see *Attridge, Hebrews*, 15–17.

The last few decades have witnessed many studies on the structure of Hebrews based on ancient rhetorical theory. See Craig R Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," *CBQ* (2002): 103-123; Koester, *Hebrews*, 79–96; Lindars, "Rhetorical Structure;" Martin and Whitlark, "Encomiastic Topics;" Michael W Martin and Jason A Whitlark, "Choosing What Is Advantageous: The Relationship between Epideictic and Deliberative Syncrisis in Hebrews," *NTS* (2012): 379-400; W.G. Übelacker, *Der Hebräerbrief als Appell: Untersuchungen zu Exordium, Narratio, und Postscriptum (Hebr 1–2 und 13,22–25)* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989); John R. Walters, "The Rhetorical Arrangement of Hebrews," *AsTJ* (1996): 59–70.

[67] For example, Vanhoye's attention to the structuring devices minimizes the importance of the more obvious grammatical and structural similarities of Heb 4:14–16 and 10:19–25, which function like hinges dividing Hebrews into three related parts. Koester's suggestion that Heb 2:5–9 acts as the *propositio* stands in tension to the author's own identification of the main point of the discourse (κεφάλαιον) as the high priestly and kingly role of Jesus (Heb 8:1). The alternation of epideictic and deliberative *synkrises* as discerned by Martin and Whitlark likewise stumbles over the placement of Heb 2:1–4, which interrupts the first epideictic syncrisis (1:1–14; 2:5–18).

rhetorical-critical interpretations struggle to adequately account for the nature and function of the rhetoric of Hebrews. Koester, who enthusiastically applies insights from ancient rhetorical theory to the interpretation of Hebrews, admits that Hebrews is at least "unconventional rhetorically" because of how frequently it presents God as the speaker.[68] Koester's observation resembles the broader conclusion of Kennedy that the New Testament contains a "distinctive rhetoric of religion" at the heart of which "lies authoritative proclamation, not rational persuasion."[69] More poignantly than Kennedy, Wilhelm Wuellner insists that, "Rhetoric in the service of religion is never merely persuasive—nor mainly convincing."[70] Rather, Wuellner distinguishes religious rhetoric on account of its apparent lack of rational efforts of persuasion and its use of myth or imagination to make intelligible what ultimately lies beyond human comprehension.[71] As a result of these differences, Wuellner adds that the interpreter must "face the task for accounting for the power of religious texts," which may move beyond linearity or logic.[72] To account for this power, Wuellner suggestively but incompletely turns to *De Sublimitate* as

[68] Koester, "Hebrews, Rhetoric, and the Future of Humanity," 108.

[69] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 6. Kennedy distinguishes the "radical (basically sacred) rhetoric of authority" with the "rhetoric of rational persuasion" in Paul's thinking (93; see discussion, 93–96). The Gospel of Mark is also an example of "radical Christian rhetoric" characterized by "assertion and absolute claims of authoritative truth without evidence or logical argument" (104). The Gospel of John is "radical Christian rhetoric" because it demands an "immediate and direct response to the truth" (113). See also Kennedy's concluding remarks on radical rhetoric (159–60).

[70] Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism," 457.

[71] Wilhelm Wuellner, “Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; JSNT Supp. 90; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 508. He adopts the defining characteristics of the concept of "sacred rhetoric," discussed by Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988). Wuellner's insights recall Amos Wilder's much earlier understanding of the authors of the NT as "world-makers." See Amos N. Wilder, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971 [1964]); Amos N. Wilder, "Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric," *JBL* (1956): 1-11; Amos N Wilder, *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). For a discussion of Wilder's place within rhetorical-critical interpretation of the NT, see Robbins and Patton, "Rhetoric and Biblical Criticism." Paul Minear considers Hebrews to be a prime exemplar of Wilder's concept of theopoetic; see Paul S. Minear, "An Early Christian Theopoetic," *Semeia* (1978): 201–214. Luke Johnson also emphasizes the world-making power of New Testament compositions, including Hebrews; see Luke Timothy Johnson, "Imagining the World Scripture Imagines," *MT* (1998): 165-180; Luke Timothy Johnson, "The Scriptural World of Hebrews," *Int* (2003): 237–250. For a view of religion's "world-making" capacity outside of New Testament studies, see Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Anchor Books ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969 [1967]).

[72] Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis and Rhetoric," 506.

a means for analyzing the religious rhetoric of the New Testament.[73]

The following chapters follow but expand upon Wuellner's attempt to account for the "religious rhetoric" of the New Testament and the "power of religious texts" by drawing on the perspective of *De Sublimitate*. With its focus on God's powerful speech, the depiction of heavenly locales and beings, and promise of an unshakeable kingdom, Hebrews 12:18–29 exemplifies the power of religious texts to make intelligable that which lies beyond human comprehension. Since the perspective of *De Sublimitate* intersects with the analysis of style in ancient literary and rhetorical treatises, it will help us identify the distinctive use of language and stylistic shape of Heb 12:18–29; this will lead to a clearer understanding of the passage's place and function within in Hebrews as a whole. Unlike other ancient treatises, however, *De Sublimitate* provides a superior framework of describing and interpreting the particular capacity of language as it relates to the "power" of religious texts. The treatise ascribes to language—not reducible to matters of style but not independent of them either—a capacity to move discourse beyond reason and logic, to produce powerful emotions, to convey vivid portraits of reality, and to produce something like the effects of religious experience. In order to account for the syle and function of Heb 12:18–29, I will capitalize on this linkage between the stylistic shape and capacity of language in *De Sublimitate*, which I develop more fully in the next chapter.

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[73] See, Wilhelm Wuellner, "Reconceiving a Rhetoric of Religion: A Rhetoric of Power as the Power of the Sublime," in *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics: Wilhelm Wuellner and His Influence* (ed. James D. Hester and J. David Hester; Emory Studies in Early Christianity 9; New York; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 23–77.

Chapter Two:
A Reading of *De Sublimitate*

Much about *De Sublimitate* remains an enigma to modern scholarship. The earliest surviving manuscripts have several large lacunae. In some places, the author refers to his own previous work, which is no longer extant, and he also engages the ideas of other theorists whose works have disappeared. The treatise provides very little information about the author, the recipient Postumius Terentianus, or the historical and political context in which it was written. At best, the treatise offers only a few tantalizing clues about its author, recipient, and context. This chapter introduces readers to the structure, contents, and overall focus of the treatise, particularly the author’s emphasis on the intended effects of ὕψος on the hearer.

An Orientation to *De Sublimitate*

The identity of the author and the precise date of composition are not determinative for this dissertation, since I do not assume any dependence on or even awareness of the treatise on the part of the author of Hebrews. Nevertheless, a review of these topics will be helpful for those interpreters of the New Testament who may not be as familiar with *De Sublimitate* as they are with other rhetorical treatises.

The Author of the Treatise

One of the earliest manuscripts of *De Sublimitate* (Parisinus 2036; 10th-century CE), which most likely served as the basis for subsequent manuscripts,[1] reveals early uncertainty about the treatise's author. The title of this manuscript identifies "Dionysius Longinus" (Διονυσίου Λογγίνου) as the author, but the table contents refers to the author as "Dionysius or Longinus" (Διονυσίου ἢ Λογγίνου). Since we have no other mention of an

[1] See D.A. Russell, *'Longinus' On The Sublime: Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), xxii.

ancient author by the name of Dionysius Longinus,[2] scholars think it more likely that one of the two names in the table of contents is the author of the treatise. They understand Dionysius as a reference to the first-century CE writer Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Longinus as a reference to the third-century CE scholar Cassius Longinus. Though some have entertained the idea of Dionysius as the author of the treatise, most find in *De Sublimitate* a "whole impression of mind and style" that differs from that of Dionysius.[3]

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, attributing *De Sublimitate* to Cassius Longinus enjoyed widespread approval. Critics indicate two aspects of the treatise that challenge this view. The first concerns the authors evaluated within the treatise. The author of *De Sublimitate* holds a more positive view of Plato than the one found in the extant writings of Cassius Longinus. Similarly, its failure to include the writings of Aelius Aristides, or other figures from the Second Sophistic, seems inexplicable, if the treatise were the work of Cassius Longinus. The second problem concerns the cultural and intellectual context related to the final chapter of the treatise, which provides important but ultimately inconclusive details suggesting a date of composition in the first-century or second-century CE, not the third.[4]

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[2] See Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxiii.

[3] Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxiv

[4] Russell insists that the final chapter is "the main—I think incontrovertible—argument against the identification of L [the author of the treatise] with Cassius Longinus" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxv). In *Subl.* 44, the author discusses the decline in eloquence in his cultural context and mentions world peace. Both of these statements are, for Russell, commonplace statements made by first-century CE writers that would be quite at odds with the third-century CE context from which Cassius Longinus wrote.

Malcolm Heath argues for Cassius Longinus as the author. See Malcolm Heath, “Longinus and the Ancient Sublime,” in *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (ed. Timothy M. Costelloe; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 11–23; Malcolm Heath, "Longinus, *On Sublimity," Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* (1999): 43–74. In his 1999 article, Heath evaluates those factors used to disprove the authorship of Cassius Longinus, namely the social, cultural, and historical context imagined by the final chapter of the extant treatise. Though he does not disprove the first-century CE hypothesis entirely, he attempts to show how each of the decisive elements could be representative of the third-century CE as well as the first.

M.J. Boyd suggests an alternative to both Russell and Health. He thinks the author is indeed Longinus, but not Cassius Longinus of the third-century CE. Rather, the author wrote in the first-century, possibly around 40 CE. This Longinus, according to medieval scholastics, was responsible for twenty-one books on philosophical discourse. See M.J. Boyd, "Longinus, the 'Philosophical Discourses', and the Essay 'On the Sublime'," *Classical Quarterly* (1957): 39–46.

Ultimately, I agree with those scholars who conclude that the author's identity is no longer recoverable, given the state of the treatise and its history of reception.[5] I also find the reasons given for doubting the authorship of Cassius Longinus to be persuasive. Though there are interesting details—like the author's favorable paraphrase of Gen 1:3 in *Subl.* 9.9 and similarities with Philo's diction and subject matter—that suggest a possible Jewish background for the author, this too cannot be confirmed.[6] Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to the author of *De Sublimitate* as Longinus.

Two other elements in the treatise, both mentioned in *Subl.* 1.1, may have bearing on its date of composition: the treatise's recipient (or patron) and the mention of another critic, Caecilius, who had previously written a treatise on ὕψος. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Considering Caecilius

Most modern interpreters understand the Caecilius of *Subl.* 1.1 to be Caecilius of Calacte, based on references to him in the works of other ancient authors. According to the tenth-century lexicon of Suda,[7] this Caecilius was a former slave and Jewish rhetorician

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[5] Russell insists that any guesses about authorship are "shots in the dark" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxix) See also Fyfe, "All we can safely say of the author is that we do not know who he was or where he lived or when he wrote," in Longinus, *De Sublimitate/On the Sublime* (trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), xviii. Grube, who ultimately resists the "fashion" of dating the treatise to the first-century CE, nevertheless remains agnostic regarding its author: "The first-century date is not only not proved, but in my view improbable. Let us therefore take the work to be of uncertain date and authorship." See G.M.A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Indianapolis, Ind.; Cambridge: Hackett, 1995 [1965]), 342. Earlier than both Russell and Grube, Baldwin refers to the author as "The Great Unknown." See Charles Sears Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic: Interpreted from Representative Works* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), 122. Cf. Heath, "Ancient Sublime," 69: "The available evidence does not allow a definitive answer to the question of the authorship of *On sublimity* (*sic*). I believe, however, that the arguments presented here tilt the balance of probability strongly in Longinus' favour. Pseudo-Longinus is a figure now so entrenched in the scholarly consciousness and so familiar that we can easily forget his purely hypothetical status."

[6] Russell mentions Mommsen's argument that the author was a Hellenized Jew and concludes that it "cannot be proved, but it cannot be disproved either" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxx). He notes the less plausible suggestion of Rostagni that the philosopher mentioned in *Subl.* 44 is actually Philo. John Gager takes the allusion as an indicator of the treatise's proximity to Hellenistic Judaism: "Thus it may be little more than a matter of personal preference whether we call 'Longinus' a thoroughly hellenized Jew or a pagan with knowledge of and sympathy for aspects of hellenized Judaism." See John G Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 56–63, quotation from p. 63.

[7] See Renzo Tosi, "Suda," *Brill's New Pauly* (Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds.; Brill Online, 2015).

teaching in Rome at the time of Augustus.[8] Caecilius of Calacte was a contemporary of and companion[9] to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The two figures were both historians and literary critics; both were embroiled in the stylistic debates of the Roman period and championed the Attic style over the Asiatic style.[10] Though he wrote a little-known history of the slave wars in Sicily, Caecilius was more recognized by his successors for his literary critical works, including several works related to Atticism, a handbook on rhetoric, and a volume on the proper use of figures.[11]

Caecilius's previous treatise on ὕψος figures prominently in *De Sublimitate*, including several explicit references to his work.[12] It is likely that the author of *De Sublimitate*, and possibly the recipient of the treatise (Postumius Terentianus), had access to Caecilius's treatise.[13] Much of *De Sublimitate* is a polemical response to Caecilius's treatise. Of particular interest for dating the treatise, Longinus criticizes Caecilius's rigid adherence to Atticism.[14]

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[8] The account from Suda, though helpful, is not free from error; for example, it gives Caecilius an impossibly long life span (Augustus to Hadrian). Russell thinks the error "does not seriously effect the identity" of the Caecilius in *De Sublimitate* (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 58). Russell accepts the Augustan date, the account of Caecilius's profession, and his placement in Rome but is more hesitant to view Caecilius as Jewish and a former slave.

[9] See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Pomp.* 3: "My friend Caecilius (τῷ φιλτάτῳ Καικιλίῳ), however, thinks with me that his [Thucydides] enthymemes have been imitated and emulated in a special degree by Demosthenes." Translation is from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Three Literary Letters, Ep. ad Ammaeum I, Ep. ad Pompeium, Ep. ad Ammaeum 2* (trans. W. Rhys Roberts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 115, 17. See also Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.1.16. Quintilian is here tracing the origins of rhetoric, from ancient Greek predecessors to Latin-speaking theorists (see 3.1.8–21). Quintilian links Caecilius to Dionysius, Apollonius Molon, and Areus who were active in the Roman period.

[10] See, e.g. W. Rhys Roberts, "Caecilius of Calacte," *AJP* (1897): 304: "His [Caecilius's] energies were chiefly spent in waging war against the license of the Asiatic school, and in inculcating a pure Attic style." For an overview of the debate between Attic and Asiatic oratorical style, see Gualtiero Calboli, "Atticism," *Brill's New Pauly* (Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds.; Brill Online, 2015); Gualtiero Calboli, "Asianism," *Brill's New Pauly* (Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds.; Brill Online, 2015). See also Jakob Wisse, "Greek, Romans, and the Rise of Atticism," in *Greek Literary Theory after Aristotle: A Collection of Papers in Honour of D.M. Schenkeveld* (ed. J.G.J, Abbenes *et al.*; Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995) 65–82.

[11] Mention of the two latter editions comes from Quintilian. For the art of rhetoric, see *Inst.* 3.1.16. For Caecilius's work on figures, see *Inst.* 9.3.39.

[12] See *Subl.* 1.1; 4.2; 8.2, 4; 31.1; 32.1, 8.

[13] W. Rhys Roberts has suggested that *De Sublimitate* adopts the structure of Caecilius's treatise and even several of the examples analyzed in it as well (see Roberts, "Caecilius," 309). Russell, among others, takes a far more minimalist view of the influence of Caecilius's treatise on *De Sublimitate* (Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxix).

[14] See D.C. Innes, "Longinus and Caecilius: Models of the Sublime," *Mnemosyne* (2002): 259–284. Though it is unlikely that the author of *De Sublimitate* fully endorsed Asianism, Innes indicates those places in the treatise that take a perspective less rigorous in its adherence to Atticism than that of Caecilius. Specifically, she notes the different treatment of Plato and Cicero in each treatise. Caecilius, and other proponents of a rigid Atticism, preferred only those dialogues of Plato that had a plain style. Caecilius probably also had a

Longinus's critique places the treatise in a period when notions of the ideal style were closely associated with the simple style of Atticism. The general debate between Longinus and Caecilius about the nature of ὕψος seems bound to the criticism of the Augustan period as well.[15] Both of these aspects suggest, but cannot definitively confirm, a date of composition for *De Sublimitate* in the first-century CE.

Terentianus: Student or Patron

The identity of the recipient of the treatise is also a matter of scholarly speculation. Terentianus, or Postumius Terentianus, as he is referred to in the first lines of the treatise, is addressed several times.[16] The author refers to Terentianus in terms that denote friendship between the two or perhaps a patron-client relationship (φίλτατε [1.1; 12.4; 29.2; 41.1] and ἥδιστε [1.4; 4.3]); if the patron-client relationship is assumed, it is likely that Terentianus would have been the patron for Longinus.[17] Regardless of the precise relationship between Longinus and Terentianus, it is likely that Terentianus, if not himself a teacher, is at least "a professional literary man" who is a student of Longinus.[18] The

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low view of Cicero, who many criticized for his Asianism (see Cicero, *Orat.* 23–24, 28–32). Innes proposes that Caecilius celebrated Demosthenes, and perhaps Demosthenes alone, for achieving ὕψος. In contrast, Longinus finds examples of ὕψος in a larger number of authors, including Plato and Cicero, despite their alleged Asianist tendencies (277–78).

[15] Innes dates *De Sublimitate* in the first-century CE because it accords well with critical reflection characteristic of the Augustan period: "Words of height become technical terms of style only in the second half of the first century BC...in Greek the vocabulary of ὕψος appears first as technical terms in the theory of style in Caecilius and Dionysius. So the terminology of the sublime coincides with the rise of Atticism..." (Innes, "Models of the Sublime," 273–74).

Casper de Jonge offers additional support for dating *De Sublimitate* in the Augustan period. He notes similarities between the perspective of *De Sublimitate* and the critical essays of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Since Dionysius of Halicarnassus can be dated firmly to the first-century CE, he suggests that *De Sublimitate* fits best with critical reflection on ὕψος in the Augustan period. See Casper C de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus on the Sublime: Rhetoric and Religious Language," *AJP* (2012): 271-300.

[16] See *Subl.* 1.1; 1.4; 4.3; 12.4; 29.2; 44.1.

[17] On the basis of φίλος and φίλτατε, the patron-client relationship has been argued vigorously by Walter Allen, "The Terentianus of the ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ," *AJP* (1941): 51–64. Allen's article was criticized by Godolphin on account of Allen's "pyramiding of hypotheses" (86) that stretch the limits of plausibility. See F.R.B. Godolphin, "The Author of the ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ," *AJP* (1942): 83–86. The epithet κράτιστος (39.1), which Allen takes to be an indicator of Terentianus's senatorial rank (Allen, "Terentianus," 54–55), should be understood in a more general sense (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 59). Both φίλτατε and κράτιστε were used in scientific treatises to identify the recipients; see Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. 132–33.

[18] Allen, "Terentianus," 52. The author notes Terentianus's "learning and culture" (παιδείας ἐπιστήμονα)

treatise itself gives the impression that Terentianus was fairly familiar with the earlier work of Caecilius on ὕψος (and possibly other theorists as well).

Summary

This brief survey of critical questions concerning the author, recipient, and date of *De Sublimitate* leaves more questions than answers. Though I will refer to the author of the treatise as Longinus, the actual identity of the author remains a matter of speculation based on plausibility, not irrevocable proof. Likewise, while the author's engagement with Caecilius suggests a date of composition closer to the height of the Attic-Asianist controversy, this does not prove definitively that *De Sublimitate* was composed in the first-century CE. The omission of any reference to Aelius Aristides or other writers from the Second Sophistic in is notable but not determinative of a first-century CE setting as well. The survey does indicate, however, that Longinus was a part of a much larger conversation concerned with the nature and potential effects of style.

Approaching the Subject: Describing ὝΨΟΣ

A word about the general outline of the treatise must precede the analysis of its specific sections. The first eight chapters introduce the discussion of ὕψος found in the treatise. These include an initial description of ὕψος (1.3–4), an affirmation that ὕψος is both a matter of innate ability and art (ch. 2),[19] and a survey of failed attempts to achieve ὕψος (chs. 3–7).[20] In *Subl.* 8, Longinus identifies the five sources of ὕψος: (1) the power of conceiving impressive thoughts; (2) the use of strong emotion; (3) the proper construction of figures of thought and speech; (4) nobility of diction; and (5) superior sentence composition. With the exception of a few digressions, the five sources provide the outline

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in 1.3 and his previous experience (ἐκ πείρας) with the ὕψος in 1.4.

[19] The question of the role of nature (genius) and art is also a major point of contention in the dialogue between Crassus and Antonius in Cicero's *De. or.* 1.207–61.

[20] In modern editions, *Subl.* 3 follows approximately two or three missing manuscript pages. Somewhere in the missing section, Longinus begins to consider the faults related to sublime rhetoric. A number of faults are discussed, but without the introductory framework that is likely present in the missing section, it is difficult to decipher completely the manner by which Longinus has catalogued them.

for the rest of the treatise: he discusses thought and emotion in chapters 9–15, the use of figures in chapters 16–29, the characteristics of noble diction in chapters 30–38, and sentence structure in chapters 39–43.[21] The final chapter recounts an intriguing dialogue between Longinus and an unnamed philosopher concerning the relationship between great literature and cultural decline, which provides insight not only into the contextual milieux in which it was written but more importantly into one of the functions or effects of ὕψος.[22]

The Effects of Ὕψος and the Limits of Persuasion (Subl. 1.3–4)

Longinus first introduces ὕψος while explaining his purpose for writing the treatise, which is to improve upon the work of Caecilius. Longinus evaluates Caecilius's treatise according to the two requirements of every systematic treatise (πάσα τεχνολογία, 1.1): the definition of the subject and the method for achieving it. Caecilius has effectively defined "the nature of the sublime rhetoric" (τι ὑπάρχει τὸ ὑψηλόν) through countless examples (1.1). Yet, he has failed to tell his readers *how* they too may produce literature characterized by ὕψος.

Longinus seeks to correct Caecilius's omission. As a consequence, though, Longinus offers little in the way of a clear definition of ὕψος. He assumes, to the misfortune of the modern reader, Terentianus's awareness of the definition provided by Caecilius and does not repeat it. Instead, he tends to define ὕψος by describing its intended effects. His focus on the distinctive effects of ὕψος appears clearly in his programmatic statemenent early in the treatise:

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[21] I agree with the suggestion of Innes that *Subl.* 43 should be viewed as an appendix, which sets the stage for the climactic final chapter. See Doreen C. Innes, "Longinus: Structure and Unity," in *Greek Literary Theory after Aristotle: A Collection of Papers in Honour of D.M. Schenkeveld* (ed. J.G.J, Abbenes *et al.*; Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995), 113–14.

[22] While I will focus on ὕψος as it relates to certain intended effects upon the hearer, the meaning of ὕψος remains a matter of debate. For an overview, see Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxx–xlii. Helpful studies that treat the question include: F.R.B. Godolphin, "The Basic Critical Doctrine of 'Longinus,' *On the Sublime," TAPA* (1937): 172–183; G.M.A. Grube, "Notes on the ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ," *AJP* (1957): 355–374; Heath, "Ancient Sublime,"; James J. Hill, "The Aesthetic Principles of the *Peri Hupsous," JHI* (1966): 265–274; Innes, "Models of the Sublime;" Charles P. Segal, "Ὕψος and the Problem of Cultural Decline in the *De Sublimitate," HSCP* (1959): 121–146; George B Walsh, "Sublime Method: Longinus on Language and Imitation," *Classical Antiquity* (1988): 252-269.

> Further, writing for a man of such learning and culture as yourself, dear friend, I almost feel freed from the need of a lengthy preface showing how the sublime passages (τὰ ὕψη) consist in a consummate excellence and distinction of language (ἀκρότης καὶ ἐξοχή τις λόγων), and that this alone gave to the greatest poets and historians their pre-eminence and clothed them with immortal fame. For the effect of genius (τὰ ὑπερφυᾶ) is not to persuade (εἰς πειθώ) the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves (εἰς ἔκστασιν ἄγει). Invariably what inspires wonder (τὸ θαυμάσιον) casts a spell upon us (σὺν ἐκπλήξει) and is always superior to what is merely convincing (τοῦ πιθανοῦ) and pleasing (τοῦ πρὸς χάριν). For the convincing (τὸ πινθανόν) is usually under our own control, while these things, exercising an irresistible power and force, get the upper hand with every member of the audience. (*Subl.* 1.3–4)[23]

This description provides important insight into Longinus's view of ὕψος, which is developed elsewhere in the treatise and is the focus of the present chapter.

In the first place, ὕψος relates to expression, that is the particular language and style of a passage. Longinus says that ὕψος consists of "a consummate excellence and distinction of language." Whatever else ὕψος may mean to Longinus, it is related to the particular forms and potentials of language. Accordingly, Longinus devotes much of the treatise to the evaluation of topics typically considered in the ancient analysis of style, namely the use of figures, word choice, and the arrangement of words. These, as I discuss more fully in the next chapter, were topics in ancient discussions of style and would surely contribute to an "excellent" style. Yet, such excellence in language is not the only attribute of ὕψος. Several examples of ὕψος cited by Longinus do not, on purely formal grounds, qualify as "excellent" writing. To take but one notable example, Longinus alludes to the creation story in Genesis 1 (*Subl.* 9.9). On stylistic grounds, the terse, direct language of the Greek version does not align with the qualities of the "elevated" or "grand" style, which may explain why Longinus only alludes to it rather than citing it directly. Longinus connects the effect of ὕψος in Gen 1, not with the manner in which it is written, but with

[23] LCL: Fyfe, modified. Longinus's description indicates that ὕψος is not confined to one particular genre, but lends to various writings of old—both ancient poets and prose-writers—pre-eminence and immortal fame. For the translation of συγγραφεύς as "prose-writer," see Russell, *'Longinus'*, 61. For a similar pairing of "poets and prose-writers," see Plato, *Phaedr.* 235C and Sextus Empiricus, *Gramm.* 57. Later, συγγραφεύς attains a more narrow meaning, "historian," which stands in opposition to the orator, as in Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 52; *Lys.* 3).

the idea expressed by the allusion, namely Moses's representation of divine power.[24] The value of Moses's insight, by extension, is that it enables the hearers to adequately perceive this aspect of the divine.

Second, writings characterized by ὕψος are distinguished by their intended effects, which Longinus says are wonder inspiring and spell-casting. These effects are opposed to the convincing (τὸ πινθανόν) and the pleasing (τὸ πρὸς χάριν), likely an allusion to the three offices of the orator (to prove, to please, and to move), which Cicero connects with three styles (the plain, the middle, and the vigorous).[25] This allusion once again places the treatise within ancient dicussions of style. By extension, then, ὕψος would not correspond to the first office (to prove) nor with the second office (to please), but to the third office of the orator (to move).[26] The allusion highlights that ὕψος *does* something different than persuasive or pleasing language does; its *moving* effects distinguish it.[27] Even the words that Longinus uses to describe ὕψος—the marvelous (ὑπερφυής) and the wonderful (τὸ

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[24] De Jonge takes the allusion to Genesis as definitive proof that ὕψος cannot be limited to traditional considerations of style (see de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus," 297).

[25] "The man of eloquence whom we seek, following the suggestion of Antonius, will be one who is able to speak in court or in deliberative bodies so as to prove, to please, and to sway or persuade (*ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat*). To prove (*probare*) is the first necessity, to please (*delectare*) is charm, to sway (*flectere*) is victory; for it is the one thing of all that avails most in winning verdicts. For these three functions of the orator there are three styles, the plain style for proof (*subtile in probando*), the middle style for pleasure (*modicum in delectando*), the vigorous style for persuasion (*vehemens in flectendo*); and in this last is summed up the entire virtue of the orator" (Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 69 [LCL: Hendrickson and Hubbell]). Ancient theories of style will be discussed more fully in chapter three. A similar notion of the three styles with different intended purposes appears also in Quintilian, *Instit.* 12.10.58–68. Dionysius of Halicarnassus notes three styles of arrangement (ἁρμονία) or composition (σύνθεσις): the austere, the smooth, and the mixed (*Comp.* 21). He devotes a chapter to the nature of each style along with characteristic authors of each (see *Comp.* 22–24). The earliest account of the three kinds (*tria genera*) of style appears in *Rhet. Her.* 4.11–16. According to *Rhet. Her.*, the three styles are the grand, the middle, and the simple (4.11).

[26] Longinus makes a similar statement in *Subl.* 39.1: "...men find in melody (ἡ ἁρμονία) not only a natural instrument of persuasion and pleasure (πειθοῦς καὶ ἡδονῆς), but also a marvelous instrument of grandeur and emotion (μεγαληγορίας καὶ πάθους θαυμαστόν τι ὄργανον)." Grandeur and emotion appear in this context to be synonyms or at least vital components of ὕψος. Grandeur is also the product of imagination (15.1) and figures (16.1). Emotion, frequently identified as a component or effect of ὕψος, is identified as one of the five sources of ὕψος. Emotion and the other sources will be discussed more fully below.

[27] Longinus's discussion of ὕψος demonstrates some similarity to Cicero's discussion of the vigorous style in *Or. Brut.* 97–99. Cicero explains that orator who employs the vigorous style "has the greatest power" and an eloquence that "rushes along with the roar of a mighty stream." This form of eloquence "has the power to sway men's minds (*tractare animos*) and move them in every possible way (*omni modo permovere*). Now it storms the feelings, now it creeps in; it implants new ideas and uproots the old" (*Or. Brut.* 97). Both ὕψος and the *vehemens* style are distinguished by how they *move* the hearer. This aspect of ὕψος, and its bearing on Heb 12:18–29, will be discussed more fully in chapter five.

θαυμάσιον)—relate to this moving effect. As Longinus explains in *Subl.* 35, one of the important effects of great writing is that it "wins the wonder" of the hearers, which reorients the hearers to what really matters.

Longinus's understanding of the relationship between ὕψος and persuasion (πειθώ) provides further insight into the intended effects of ὕψος. Although many theorists—both ancient and modern—define rhetoric as the power or art of persuasion,[28] *Subl.* 1.4 places persuasion in a secondary position to ὕψος. Longinus explains that the convincing (τὸ πινθανόν) remains under the control of the hearer.[29] D.A. Russell, in his commentary on *De Sublimitate*, explains that the hearers' command over the convincing relates to their ability to "choose whether or not to let a rational argument convince [them] to act—or vote—in a certain way." The effects of ὕψος, in contrast, move beyond rational argumentation and result in the hearers' loss of agency, not the demonstration of it. The effect of ὕψος leads to an experience of ἔκστασις, a moving beyond personal agency and reasoned choice. At a basic level, the ecstatic effects of sublime rhetoric refer to movement from (ἐκ) one state or place (στάσις) to another.[30]

As the remainder of the treatise makes clear, the intended effects of ὕψος *move* the hearers in a number of ways. First, ὕψος dislocates the hearers from their immediate setting and transports them into the scene described by the text. Second, ὕψος destabilizes or stirs the hearers, often through evoking or creating a powerful emotional response in the hearers. Third, ὕψος reorients the hearers to what really matters. To communicate this dimension of ὕψος, the treatise often adopts religious language, relates ὕψος to religious

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[28] See, e.g. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.1: "Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty (δύναμις) of discovering the possible means of persuasion (τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν) in reference to any subject whatever;" Quintilian, *Instit.* 3.3.12: "For although the orator's task is to speak well, rhetoric is the science of speaking well. Or if we adopt another view, the task of the artist is to persuade, while the power of persuasion resides in the art;" Cicero, *De. or.* 1.138, "[T]he duty of an orator is to speak in a style fitted to convince" (see similarly, *De. or.* 1.213, 260).

[29] Russell, *'Longinus'*, 62.

[30] On this meaning of ἔκστασις, see discussion of Yun Lee Too, *The Idea of Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) in chapter five.

experience, or connects it with extra-worldly realities. In chapter five of this study, Longinus's insight into these intended effects of ὕψος and his view of the capacity of language more generally will provide a framework for considering the distinctive form and function of the language used in Heb 12:18–29.

Failed Attempts to Achieve ῞ΥΨΟΣ (Subl. 3–5)

Continuing with his emphasis on *how* to bring about the intended effects of ὕψος, Longinus evaluates failed attempts that contrast with genuine ὕψος. In *Subl.* 3–7, he evaluates these vices primarily with reference to how they relate to the hearer's experience of a text.

In *Subl.* 3, Longinus presents ὕψος as the middle between turgidity (τὸ οἰδοῦν) and puerility (τὸ μειρακιῶδες). Turgidity aims at ὕψος, but ultimately overshoots it and results in unclear phrasing and confusing images (3.1). The opposite, puerility, results from what Russell calls "pedantic overworked thought"[31] that leads to another fault, frigidity (ψυχρότης).[32] Both puerility and frigidity are characterized by low-mindedness (μικρόψυχος, 3.4; 4.7). Finally, "Parenthyrson," pertains to emotion that is out of place either because it occurs where it is not required or because it is used without restraint (9.5). Though less developed, genuine ὕψος is portrayed again as the middle way between the extremes of too much and too little emotion.

Longinus concludes his discussion of failed attempts to reach ὕψος in *Subl.* 5. He states that the faults typically accompany attempts to attain ὕψος (5.1). This is true even of authors who achieve ὕψος in one place, but fail to achieve to do so in another. In *Subl.* 7, Longinus outlines additional characteristics of ὕψος in contrast to failed attempts. Again, it is distinguished most clearly by the effect it has on hearers. Sublime rhetoric moves the

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[31] Russell, *'Longinus'*, 74.

[32] Frigidity is particularly true of the historian Timaeus, whose faults Caecilius had been enumerated (4.1–2). Frigidity is even present in those "very demigods (οἱ ἥρωες) Xenophon and Plato" who "sometimes forget themselves in their fondness for such cheap effects" (*Subl.* 4.4). Cf. Aristotle's notion of the frigid style (τὰ ψυχρὰ κατὰ τὴν λέξιν) in *Rhet.* 3.3.3.

hearers by elevating (ἐπαίρω) them (7.2). It has a long-lasting influence, providing "truly abundant food for thought" that outlasts "the moment of utterance" (7.3). Ultimately, its effects are irresistible (7.3) and appeal to "all people at all times" (7.4). In short, the list of failures demonstrates Longinus's practical approach: even those elements that he will identify as the sources of ὕψος in the next chapter (*Subl.* 8) can, if not utilized properly, detract from the intended effects of ὕψος.

Toward a Translation of ὝΨΟΣ

In the analysis above, I have refrained from translating ὕψος and τὸ ὑψηλόν into English. To avoid using cumbersome phrases like "passages characterized by ὕψος" in the subsequent analysis of *De Sublimitate*, I will speak of the treatise's subject matter—ὕψος and τὸ ὑψηλόν—as "sublime rhetoric." This shorthand reference will prove effective for several reasons.

First, it clearly connects Longinus's treatise with larger discussions of rhetoric. He does, after all, hope to consider the practical value of sublime rhetoric for those involved in public life (*Subl.* 1.2). However, by speaking of "rhetoric," I hope to use the term's broader meaning—namely, the consideration of languageand its potential effects—rather than in reference to the body of theory about ancient oratory alone. Importantly, this allows us to consider the goal or function of sublime rhetoric without assuming that its intended goal is especially (or exclusively) persuasion, although this is the goal found in much of ancient rhetorical theory.

Second, "sublime rhetoric" considers the variety of examples discussed elsewhere in the treatise in a way that "sublime speech" would not. Longinus draws examples of sublime rhetoric from poetry, speeches, philosophy, and prose. Referring to ὕψος and its cognates as sublime speech would threaten to limit it to a preconceived social context or literary genre. Although the famous orators Demosthenes, Lysias, and Cicero are discussed in the

treatise, it would be incomplete to limit the effects of sublime rhetoric to formal oratory. Such genre-displacing analysis should also distinguish "sublime rhetoric" from the three traditional species of rhetoric (epideictic, deliberative, forensic) in the ancient rhetorical handbooks (e.g. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.3.3; Quintilian, *Instit.* 3.3.14). Though not unrelated to the three species of rhetoric, the examples cited in *De Sublimitate* suggest that sublime rhetoric does not align completely with any one of them.

Third, "sublime rhetoric" more effectively describes the subject matter than the simplified form "sublime" or "sublimity." As I discuss in the appendix, the term "sublime" often attains a theoretical and abstract sense in philosophical and aesthetic formulations of sublimity. Longinus's use of ὕψος retains the word's original meaning of "height," "loftiness," and "might,"[33] but it also moves beyond this basic meaning. [34] Elsewhere ὕψος refers to the vertical movement of the author or audience, often taking with it a sense of "superhuman."[35] Even when Longinus reveals his Platonic leanings and ὕψος attains a locative sense, the meaning of ὕψος retains its reference to the quality or effect of writing (sublime rhetoric) not an abstract thing (the sublime).[36]

Finally, "sublime rhetoric" is more suitable than "sublime style." The relationship between Longinus's notion of ὕψος and the ancient analysis of style will be pursued more fully in chapter three. Suffice it so say now that equating ὕψος with one of the so-called

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[33] See LSJ, s.v. ὕψος and ὑψηλός, ή, όν. Often, ὕψος reflects the combination of "height" and "impressiveness" in *De Sublimitate*. See the similar usage in Pausanius: "Mount Atlas is so high (ὑψηλόν) that it is said to touch heaven with its peaks" (*Descr.* 1.33.6). This connection is referenced in de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus," 276.

[34] For the transference of these spatial categories into metaphysical ones in the treatise, see Hill, "Aesthetic Principles."

[35] de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus," 276–77.

[36] In his recent monograph, Robert Doran is one of the few interpreters to explicitly connect Longinus's treatise with subsequent theories of the sublime in aesthetics and philosophy. He suggests that Longinus establishes a "theory of sublimity" that has a "multilayered significance" for modern thought related to the sublime. See Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 4. Compared to other historical accounts of the theory of the sublime, Doran devotes significant attention to *De Sublimitate*; see 27–94. Doran's study is extremely valuable; however, I think he overstates the difference beteen what he calls the "natural sources" of the sublime and the "technical sources" in the treatise. As will be clear in my analysis above, one of the striking features of the treatise how the intended effects of sublime rhetoric extend even to matters of syle, i.e. use of figures, word choice, and word arrangement.

"characters of style" does not fully account for the nature or intended effects of ὕψος as they are described in the treatise.[37]

The Five Sources of Sublime Rhetoric and their Effects

In *Subl.* 8.1, Longinus introduces the five sources of sublime rhetoric: "There are, one may say, some five genuine sources of the sublime (ἡ ὑψηγορία) in literature, the common groundwork, as it were, of all five being a natural faculty of expression (ἐν τῷ λέγειν δυνάμεως), without which nothing can be done" (*Subl.* 8.1 [LCL: Fyfe]). Longinus then lists the five sources: (1) the power of conceiving impressive ideas (τὸ περὶ τὰς νοήσεις ἁδρεπήβολον);[38] (2) vehement (σφοδρός) and inspired (ἐνθουσιαστικός) emotion; (3) the proper construction of figures of thought and speech; (4) nobility of diction (ἡ γενναία φράσις); and (5) superior sentence composition (ἡ σύνθεσις).

Here, as with *Subl.* 1.3–4, Longinus suggests that sublime rhetoric consists of matters related to style, but that it not confined to them alone. On one hand, the virtues of sublime rhetoric are similar to the virtues of style that make for effective discourse—careful attention must be given to the mechanics of language (i.e. figures, diction, and sentence composition). On the other hand, Longinus identifies two sources of sublime rhetoric that do not fit as naturally with typical considerations of style: the forming of impressive thoughts and the use of vehement and inspired emotion.[39] Longinus explains the combination of stylistic and non-stylistic components in sublime rhetoric as follows:

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[37] For a brief overview, see Russell, *'Longinus'*, xxxiii–xl.

[38] For the meaning of ἁδρεπήβολον, see LSJ, s.v. ἁδρεπήβολον and s.v. ἁδρός. The adjective ἁδρός is far more common than ἁδρεπήβολον; the former denotes something that is thick, stout, bulky (LSJ) or solid or robust (Fyfe, p. 40n"a"). Russell suggests "grasp of great thoughts" or "ambitiousness in idea" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 86).

[39] In Aristotle's handbook, for example, attention to ideas might relate more closely to the task of invention (see *Rhet.* 1.2) while the role of the emotions is treated in his discussion of proof (see *Rhet.* 2.2–11). This is not to say that the emotions are unimportant for other ancient theories of oratory and style, but they play a different role. As will become clear in the analysis in this chapter and especially through the comparative discussion in the following, Aristotle's view of the emotions (to take just one example) is more *instrumental*: the emotions are one of the three means of proof leading to persuasion. As Aristotle put it, the "emotions are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgments" (*Rhet.* 2.1.8 [LCL: Freese]). In *De Sublimitate*, the emotions are not so much a means to a particular end (persuasion or otherwise), but rather a consequence or even an *effect* of ὕψος.

"These two constituents [ideas and emotion] of the sublime are for the most part congenital (αὐθιγενεῖς συστάσεις). But the other three come partly of art (διὰ τέχνης)" (8.1).[40] Thus, according to Longinus, sublime rhetoric is a matter of both natural ability *and* learned technique. While the list of the sources suggests that ὕψος refers to a quality of writing or to the capacity of an author, the treatment of each source in the treatise reveals a persistent attention to the intended effects of sublime rhetoric.

Impressive Ideas and their Effects (Subl. 9.1–15.12)

Longinus discusses the first source of sublime rhetoric, impressive ideas, in much of *Subl.* 9–15, indicated by the transition in 15.12, which frames the preceding chapters. Before turning to figures in 16.1, Longinus offers this short summary: "This must suffice for our treatment of sublimity in ideas (περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς νοήσεις ὑψηλῶν), as produced by nobility of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη) or imitation (μίμησις) or imagination (φαντασία)" (15.12). In this statement, Longinus suggests that there are three means of producing impressive ideas: nobility of mind, the imitation of great writers from antiquity, and the use of the imagination. The three means of producing impressive ideas will be discussed below.

(i) Nobility of Mind

The first source of great ideas is nobility of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη). In 9.1, he adds that "natural genius (μεγαλοφυές)" adds to nobility of mind more than any other aspect (i.e. imitation and imagination). Sublime rhetoric, he says, is the "true ring of a noble mind (μεγαλοφροσύνης ἀπήχημα)" (9.2). Recalling the the list of failed attempts at sublime

[40] The three aspects listed under the head of art (ἡ πλάσις τῶν σχημάτων, ἡ φράσις, and ἡ σύνθεσις) evoke schemes found elsewhere in ancient rhetorical traditions. Dionysius of Halicarnassus highlights how word choice, sentence composition, and figures of speech provide the grandeur and impressiveness of Theophrastus's speech (*Isocr.* 3); elsewhere, he reduces style to word choice and sentence composition (*Thuc.* 22). The division between nature and art in Longinus recalls Aristotle's insistence that one must not only know what to say; one must also know how to say it (*Rhet.* 3.1.1). See similarly Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Dem.* 51; Quintilian, *Instit.* 8.pref. 6; 8.1.1; *Rhet. ad Herm.* 1.2.3; 4.1.1; Aelius Theon, *Progym.* 81–85. This topic will be discussed more fully in chapter three.

rhetoric, Longinus insists that a "petty and servile" mind is the opposite of nobility of mind and that such mind is incapable of producing sublime rhetoric (9.3–4).

Nobility of mind appears at first glance to refer to a mental or intellectual quality of an individual. It is surprising, then, that much of Longinus's analysis focuses on the nature and function of ideas themselves, not on the nature or disposition of the person who conceives them.[41] Rather than treat each of the examples discussed by Longinus in these chapters, some synthetic observations about the nature of great ideas surveyed can be made.

First, impressive ideas relate closely to divine or superhuman realities. For instance, Longinus champions Homer's depiction of the "horses of heaven" (*Subl.* 9.5). Unlike Hesiod's failed attempt, Homer’s idea "magnifies the powers of heaven" (μεγεθύνει τὰ δαιμόνια). The precise reason for Longinus's preference is not stated, but the context provides assistance. Homer succeeds where Hesiod fails, namely in how the depiction effects the hearers. Hesiod's idea does not stir the hearers. It is not terrible (δείνος) but offensive (μισητός). Homer's image of the horses, in contrast, moves the hearers by presenting the awesome size of the horses: no matter how far a man could gaze, such a distance (from East to West) is but one stride for the horses. Longinus adds that "if the horses of heaven take two consecutive strides there will then be no place found for them in the world" (9.5). The impressiveness of the idea of such massive animals depends not only on the emotion it is intended to evoke in the audience; it also stretches the hearers

[41] Longinus mentions the genius of individuals only occasionally in chapters 9–12. See, e.g. "...Homer shows that, as genius (μεγάλης φύσεως) ebbs, it is the love of romance that characterizes old age" (9.11); "I have been led into this digression to show you, as I said, that natural genius (τὰ μεγαλοφυῆ) with the decline of vigor often falls very easily into garrulity" (9.14). It is possible that Longinus further develops his notion of nobility of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη) in the lacuna between 9.4 and 9.5. When the manuscript resumes, however, Longinus is discussing the nature and effect of ideas in Homer's writing, not Homer's nobility of mind itself. His view of Homer's declining genius is itself important, however. Genius, in his estimation, is fluid, an aspect of his perspective that some may rightly critique. See, e.g. Suzanne Guerlac, "Longinus and the Subject of the Sublime," *NLH* (1985): 275–289. What is really important for my purposes, however, is that sublime rhetoric ultimately does not depend on the capacity of an individual (i.e. whether he is a genius or not) nor even on the quality of the idea itself, but on the how Longinus focuses on the intended effects of the idea (and its manner of representation).

perception as the horses approach the edge of earth's boundaries.

Similarly, Homer's depiction of the Battle of the Gods qualifies as an impressive idea and demonstrates his "genius" (ὑπερφυᾶ). His success, however, depends as much on the use of powerful and vivid imagery (τὰ φαντάσματα) as it does on the impressiveness of the idea (9.6).[42] Homer also approves of Homer's representation of "divine nature" in his description of Poseidon in the *Iliad*.[43] Immediately following his reference to Poseidon, Longinus offers one of the more famous allusions in the whole treatise:

> So, too, the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man, having formed a worthy conception of divine power (τὴν τοῦ θείου δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν), gave expression to it at the very threshold of his *Laws* where he says: "God said"—what? "'Let there be light,' and there was light. 'Let there be earth,' and there was earth." (*Subl.* 9.9)[44]

Longinus focuses almost entirely on the *idea* expressed by the allusion to Genesis 1, not to the manner in which it is written. It is Moses's grasp of divine power that Longinus emphasizes because for him even a bare idea, if it adequately represents divine realities or divine power, can produce the intended effects of sublime rhetoric. Though not explicitly stated, the importance of vivid description is apparent: Moses's account leads the hearers to see the sudden appearance of light and earth from darkness.

Second, impressive ideas are known by their intensity. In fact, Homer's loss of intensity is an indicator of his diminishing genius (see *Subl.* 9.11–15). The older Homer lacks the virtuosity that characterized the younger one. In contrast, Longinus applauds Sappho

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[42] "You see, friend, how earth is split to its foundations, hell itself laid bare, the whole universe sundered and turned upside down; and meanwhile everything, heaven and hell, mortal and immortal alike, shares in the conflict and danger of battle" (*Subl.* 9.6).

[43] Once again, Longinus appears to conflate several sections of the *Il.* in his quotation (see Fyfe, p. 148n"b").

[44] For discussion of the romantic fascination with this allusion and scholarly misgivings about its authenticity, see discussion in Russell, *'Longinus'*, 92–94. See also the old, but still valuable, W. Rhys Robert, "The Quotation from *Genesis* in the *De Sublimitate* (IX.9)," *CR* (1897): 431–436. The authenticity of the citation was challenged on the grounds that a Greek author (see *Subl.* 12.4) would have little recourse (or interest) in the Jewish scriptures. Consequently, scholars have suggested the allusion is a later Christian interpolation. Russell indicates that Eduard Norden, *Das Genesiszitat in der Schrift vom Erhabenen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955) has proven definitively the familiarity of Greek and Latin authors in the early imperial period with Jewish writings. In the opposite direction, scholars have found in this allusion grounds for believing the author of the treatise to be Jewish himself, especially due to parallels in language with Philo, *Aet.* 5; *Prob.* 7; and Josephus, *Ant.*, Preface 3. See Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism*, 58–62.

for her intensity, which emerges from the combination of emotions and sensations in her portrait of the passion-stricken lover (*Subl.* 10.1–3). Although both Demosthenes and Cicero provide examples of sublime rhetoric, Longinus ultimately champions Demosthenes on account of his intensity: "[Demosthenes] with his violence, yes, and his speed, his force, his terrific power of rhetoric, burns, as it were, and scatters everything before him, and may therefore be compared to a flash of lightning or a thunder-bolt" (12.4). Demosthenes's "intensity and violent emotion" allow him to utterly "dumbfound (ἐκπλῆξαι)" the audience (12.5). Longinus's admiration of Demosthenes's intensity, once again, is based primarily on its moving and stirring effects: it burns, scatters, and dumbfounds the audience.

(ii) Imitation

The second source of impressive ideas emerges from the first. If one does not have nobility of mind by nature, one can at least imitate the writers of old. Imitating the nobility of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη) and natural genius (μεγαλοφυές) of others transfers sublime rhetoric to those who write later. Longinus compares the effect of imitation to the inspiration of the Pythian priestess:

> For many are carried away by the inspiration of another, just as the story runs that the Pythian priestess on approaching the tripod where there is, they say, "a rift in the earth upbreathing steam divine," becomes thereby impregnated with the divine power and is at once inspired to utter oracles; so, too, from the natural genius (μεγαλοφυΐας) of those old writers there flows into the heart of their admirers as it were an emanation from the mouth of holiness. Inspired (ἐπιπνεόμενοι) by this, even those who are not easily moved by the divine afflatus (οἱ μὴ λίαν φοιβαστικοὶ) share the enthusiasm (συνενθουσιῶσι) of these others' grandeur. (*Subl.* 13.2)

For Longinus, the great writers of old serve as conduits of "divine power" like the tripod did for the priestesses. By reading and imitating these authors, their genius "emanates" from their writings and fills their readers with some of their greatness. As an illustration of this, Longinus states that the greatness of Herodotus, Stesichorus, Archilochus, and especially Plato is due to the fact that each imitated Homer (13.3–4).

Longinus's view of imitation aligns with the practical focus of *De Sublimitate* that

Caecilius's treatise lacked by focusing on *how* to produce sublime rhetoric. Longinus suggests that those who wish to create a passage characterized by lofty expression (ὑψηγορία) and nobility of mind (μεγαλοφροσύνη) should ask themselves a series of questions. First, they are to ask how one of the great writers of old, such as Homer, Plato, or Demosthenes, would have said it (14.1). Second, they should consider what effect their writing would have had on those great writers (14.2). Third, and most importantly, the would-be writer should consider what effect the passage will have on "all posterity" (14.3). In each case, Longinus focuses imitation on its intended effects. While imitation includes considerations of style (i.e. the manner in which great writers wrote), the ultimate criterion of sublime rhetoric is how a piece of writing affects hearers through the ages.

(iii) Imagination

Longinus devotes much of *Subl.* 15 to the third source of great ideas: the imagination. Once again, Longinus introduces the relationship between imagination and sublime rhetoric in terms of intended effect. Imagination (αἱ φαντασίαι) lends "weight, grandeur, and urgency" to discourse (15.1).[45] Imagination originates in an experience of inspiration and emotion (ὑπ᾽ ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους) that leads the author to "see" what he describes. The author's own inspired vision in turn results in the vivid presentation of the image before the eyes of the audience, which has a stirring effect (τὸ συγκεκινημένον) on the audience (15.2). More clearly than elsewhere in the treatise, Longinus distinguishes between the use of the imagination in oratory and poetry. In oratory, the goal is vivid description (ἐνάργεια, 15.2) that is practical and the truthful (τὸ ἔμπρακτον καὶ ἐνάληθες,

[45] Ὄγκου καὶ μεγαληγορίας καὶ ἀγῶνος ἐπὶ τούτοις...καὶ αἱ φαντασίαι παρασκευαστικώταται. The three substantives (ὁ ὄγκος, ἡ μεγαληγορία, and ὁ ἀγών) are typical in discussions of style. For weight or lofty style (ὄγκος), see Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.5.6: "The following rules contribute to loftiness of style (εἰς ὄγκον τῆς λέξεως)" (LCL: Freese). For Demetrius, ὄγκος is an element of the "forcible" style (δεινός) (*Eloc.* 36). Demetrius speaks of how symmetry of members add "elevation" (μεγαληγροία) to a discourse (*Eloc.* 29). Some passages from Thucydides, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, demonstrate "perfect examples of the historian's sublime eloquence, the beauty of his language, his rhetorical brilliance" (*Thuc.* 27*).* According to Aristotle, the agonistic style (ἡ ἀγωνιστική λέξις) differs in form and function from the written style (ἡ γραφική λέξις) (see *Rhet.* 3.12); the written style is not appropriate for debate, and the agonistic style violates the rules of written speech.

15.8). The poetic imagination is more powerful—the purpose is to enthrall or disturb (ἔκπληξις) the audience (15.2), but tends toward exaggeration and impossibility (15.8). While inappropriate for oratory, Longinus does not dismiss the poetic imagination on account of these tendencies.

Longinus's further evaluation of the effects of the imagination, however, softens his distinction between the oratorical and poetic imagination. Even in oratory, the imagination moves beyond persuasion through its "vigor and emotion (ἐναγώνιος καὶ ἐμπαθής)." The imagination "not only convinces the audience, it positively masters them (οὐ πείθει...μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ δουλοῦται)" (15.9). Here, as in *Subl.* 1.3–4, the relationship between ὕψος and πειθώ appears. Here, ὕψος is distinguished from πειθώ because ὕψος leads to the hearers' temporary suspension of agency. The enthralling effect of imagination—previously identified as the goal of the poetic—appears also in the oratory of Demosthenes. Demosthenes draws on the imagination in his depiction of a prison break. His use of the imagination moves his discourse beyond the boundary of persuasion (ὁ τοῦ πείθειν ὅρος, 15.10) and enthralls the audience (15.11).[46] By enthralling and dominating the audience, the effects of the imagination move sublime rhetoric beyond the rational argumentation often associated with persuasion. Longinus insists that the imagination directs the audience's attention away from reasoning (ὁ ἀποδεικτικός) to the enthralling effect of the imagination (τὸ κατὰ φαντασίαν ἐκπληκτικόν), which veils (ἐγκρύπτω) the factual argument (τὸ πραγματικὸν) of a speech (*Subl.* 15.11).

Stirring Emotion

Building on his list of the five sources of ὕψος (*Subl.* 8.1), Longinus disparages

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[46] The difference between the poetic and the oratorical imagination for Longinus is not a matter of effect; both forms do lead to ἔκπληξις. The difference may relate to the subject matter or idea appropriate to each. Oratory concerns the pragmatic and realistic while poetry relates to the "strange and outlandish" (*Subl.* 15.8). In anticipation of the analysis in chapter four, I note here that the appeal to the imagination in Heb 12:18–29, with its images of fiery darkness, shaking earth, and God's voice, would qualify more with the "strange and outlandish" of poetry than with the demand for realism in oratory.

Caecilius's failure to consider emotion as a source of ὕψος. Longinus provides two possible reasons for the omission: either Caecilius thinks that ὕψος and emotion are the same thing (8.2) or he does not think that emotion contributes at all to ὕψος (8.4). Longinus suggests a middle road between these two possibilities. On one hand, ὕψος is not commensurate with emotion nor are all examples of ὕψος particularly emotion-filled. Certain emotions like pity, grief, and fear (οἶκτος, λύπη, φόβος) hinder the effects of ὕψος (8.2) while certain examples of ὕψος are not characterized by strong emotions (8.3). On the other hand, Longinus retains emotion as one of the five sources of ὕψος. For emotion to be effective, it must be genuine and occur in the right place (8.4). Above all, though, emotion is known by its intended effect: "It inspires the words as it were with a fine frenzy (ὑπὸ μανίας τινὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἐνθουσιαστικῶς ἐκπνέον) and fills them with divine afflatus (οἱνοεὶ φοιβάζον)" (8.4). Drawing on popular notions of divination and prophetic inspiration, Longinus insists that the proper use of emotions makes the words come alive and fills them with an extraordinary quality. It is worth noting, in addition, the close link between the intended effects of emotion and the words used.

Longinus's emphasis on emotion as one of the sources of ὕψος compared to Caecilius's failure to mention it presents a problem for the treatise, however. As noted above, the identification of the five sources in *Subl.* 8.1 provides a general outline for the rest of the treatise. Given that structure, it would seem that *Subl.* 9.1–15.12 would include a discussion of *both* impressive ideas and vehement emotion, with ideas coming first. *Subl.* 9.1 appears to confirm this impression since Longinus seems to begin his discussion of impressive thoughts:

> Now, since the first, I mean natural genius (μεγαλοφυής), plays a greater role than all the others, here too, although it is rather a gift than an acquired quality, we should still do our utmost to train our minds into sympathy with what is noble, and, as it were, impregnate them again and again with lofty inspiration.

He signals the conclusion of this discussion in 15.12. The problem arises with what comes

next: "The topic of figures next claims attention..." (16.1). It appears as though Longinus has neglected emotion (the second source) and moved directly to figures (the third source). He appears, in other words, to make the same error for which he criticized Caecilius.

While there are several ways to account for this omission,[47] more insight into Longinus's view of emotion can be found by considering again the transition in *Subl.* 9.1. He does not mention the conception of impressive thoughts, which he has earlier identified as the first source of sublime rhetoric. Rather, he speaks of "natural genius" (μεγαλοφυής). This resembles his earlier statement in *Subl.* 8.1 that the first two sources of sublime rhetoric (impressive ideas and emotion) are a matter of nature (αὐθιγενής). It is conceivable that *Subl.* 9.1–15.12 discusses those aspects of sublime rhetoric that emerge from "natural genius," that is both impressive thoughts and emotion. Consequently, it would be possible to conclude that his larger discussion of emotion has been lost due to damage to the manuscript. There is evidence, however, that the absence of emotion in 9.1–15.12 may have been intentional. Rather than discuss it in one section of the treatise, Longinus appears to have scattered comments about emotion and how it produces the effects of ὕψος throughout the treatise. In this way, emotion plays a vital role in making sublime rhetoric a "single body" (*Subl.* 10.1) greater than its component parts.[48] This is confirmed at least in part by the statement in 8.4 regarding emotion’s effects on words.

Emotion is linked in similar ways with the other sources of sublime rhetoric. For

[47] Among others, they include the following: (1) It is possible that it is due not to an oversight, but the result of the treatise's textual transmission. There is a significant lacuna just after 9.4, the length of which "could perfectly well contain the entire discussion of παθή" according to Russell (Russell, *'Longinus'*, xiv). (2) It is also conceivable that, due to its important or complex relationship to sublime rhetoric, Longinus has reserved treatment of emotion to the end of the treatise. In the last paragraph of the extant treatise, Longinus indicates the need to move to the "next question" of the emotions (*Subl.* 44.12). We learn here as well that Longinus had written a previous treatise on the emotions. (3) Given several references to emotion in *Subl.* 9–15 and elsewhere in the treatise, it is possible that Longinus preferred to think of emotion always in conjunction with other sources, especially the first source, great thoughts.This suggestion has been argued most completely by Innes: "But whatever the details of his explanation, I accept that Longinus preserved the validity of his five-source superstructure throughout the work and presented emotion as a source which is important but only rarely, if ever, autonomous" (Innes, "Structure and Unity," 112–13).

[48] See Innes, "Structure and Unity," 123–24.

example, emotion often accompanies impressive ideas, which tend to be awe-inspiring. In his comparison of Homer and Hesiod mentioned above, Longinus criticizes Hesiod's account for failing to provoke the emotion of awe (δεινός). Homer, however, earns Longinus's approval because he "instead of defining the danger once and for all, depicts the sailors as being all the time, again and again, with every wave on the very brink of death" (10.6).[49] Homer's success in conveying terror arises from his effective use of imagery and his particular form of language.[50] Homer's depiction of the sailors at sea illustrates how the five sources of sublime rhetoric relate to one another. While Longinus discusses the nature of the idea itself, he notes as well how the imagery and the use of language combine with that idea to produce a powerful emotional experience in the hearers.

In addition, figures enhance the emotional quality of discourse. For example, the use of apostrophe in Demosthenes's oath conveys "transcendent sublimity and emotion;" it gives the oath an increased "power of conviction;" and, it ultimately allows Demosthenes to carry away (συναρπάζω) the audience with him (16.2–3). His oath is even more powerful because it is used in the right place, in the right manner, under the right circumstances, and with the right motive. Above all, though, the oath has been carefully crafted to suit the emotion of the moment (16.3).

Other figures also add emotion to discourse. The figure of question-and-answer adds a sense of authenticity and spontaneity to the speaker's expression of emotion, which the audience then shares in turn (18.2). Inversion is particularly effective in bearing "the genuine stamp of vehement emotion" (22.1). The inversion of words reveals the speaker's natural emotional state (22.2) and allows the hearer to fully experience the emotion of the

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[49] Aristeas of Proconnesus also misses the mark of awe (δεῖνος) with his depiction of sailors at sea in the midst of a storm. Longinus remarks that this is "more flowery than fearful" (*Subl.* 10.4). Aratus also fails to adequately capture the fearfulness (φοβερός) of the idea, demeaning it and making it elegant instead (10.6).

[50] According to Longinus, Homer bends his language to fit the scene described. Homer's phrase "under the jaws of destruction (ὑπεκ θανάτοιο)" impresses Longinus, since "by forcing into an abnormal union prepositions not usually compounded he has tortured his language into conformity with the impending disaster" (*Subl.* 10.6).

speaker (22.4). In the same way, the figure of speech-in-character provides an "outbreak of emotion" (27.1). Figures, like impressive ideas, foster a particularly strong emotional response in the hearers, which is facilitated by the style of discourse or the scene it represents.

Finally, Longinus evaluates the effective use of metaphors based on the emotional response they are intended to produce in the hearers. Longinus's first consideration is the number of metaphors to be used and the proper occasion for using them. Initially, he cites with ostensible approval Caecilius's rule concerning the maximum use of two or three metaphors (32.1). More than the proper number, though, Longinus is interested in the proper timing (ὁ τῆς χρείας καιρός) for deploying metaphors, which depends on emotion. Emotion conceals the presence of metaphors. Demosthenes's indignation in *De cor.* 296 cloaks his use of multiple metaphors, enabling him to bypass Caecilius's rule (32.2). Timely and intense emotion (τὰ εὔκαιρα καὶ σφοδρὰ πάθη) ensures the successful use of several "daring" metaphors (32.4). Ultimately, the proper use of metaphor, when insulated by emotion, is designed to have an important effect on the hearer: it prevents the hearer from counting the number of metaphors being used and instead compels the hearer to share the inspiration (συνενθουσιάζω) of the speaker (32.4). Metaphor, when properly aligned with emotion, has a decentering effect on the hearer, which is described with the language of diminished personal agency and prophetic inspiration.[51]

Whether Longinus's sustained discussion of emotion has been lost due to the damaged manuscripts or if he has intentionally connected emotion with the other sources of sublime rhetoric, it is clear that emotion accompanies and facilitates the intendend effects of sublime rhetoric. Emotion makes the words of a text come alive and fills them

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[51] The use of metaphor, however, is not without its possible drawbacks. According to Caecilius, writers, especially Plato, are prone to use them excessively (*Subl.* 32.7–8). It is with Plato's alleged misuse of metaphors, and Caecilius's facile rejection of Plato in favor of Lysias, that prompts Longinus's digression in *Subl.* 33–36 (see discussion below).

with an extraordinary quality. An impressive idea or a vivid depiction of danger trigers a strong emotional response in the hearers, stirring their emotions and transporting them to the scene described. Emotion enables apostrophe to carry the hearers away and veils the presence of metaphors so that they can be as effective as possible. Longinus's description of the effects of emotion illustrates how sublime rhetoric moves hearers from one state (*stasis*) to another, creating powerful emotions and responses through encounters with a text.

Figures that Move the Hearers (Subl. 16–29)

Longinus's discussion of the role of figures in sublime rhetoric is clearly marked with an introduction in *Subl.* 16.1 and a summative conclusion in 29.2. If handled correctly, figures serve as "an important element in the sublime" (16.1). He explains that sublime rhetoric and the use of figures are naturally suited for each other since sublime rhetoric conceals the use of figures (17.1–2). In his analysis, Longinus discusses the following figures: apostrophe (16), question-and-answer (18), asyndeton (19), the combination of figures (20), omission of connecting particles (21), inversion of words (22), figures related to the case of words (23–26), speech in character (27), and periphrasis (28.1–29.1). The discussion is, however, not equally balanced, with some receiving only a passing word about their nature or intended effect (e.g. speech in character) while others receive extended attention and are illustrated with more examples (e.g. inversion) or through additional advice on the proper use of a given figure (e.g. periphrasis).

Not surprisingly, Longinus focuses his attention on the intended effect of figures, more so than on their nature or proper usage. For example, question-and-answer appeals to the imagination (εἰδοποιΐας), adds vigor to the discourse, and makes it more convincing (18.1). Inversion allows the audience to experience the raw emotion of the speaker and leaves them astounded (22.4). Similarly, figures related to the change in case all add

vividness to discourse that enhances the hearers experience of it. In particular, the change of person dislocates the audience and places them in "the center of the action" (26.3). The combination of figures, moreover, adds to the desired effects of sublime rhetoric. Demosthenes's speech against Meidas, which contains a combination of asyndeta, repetition, and vivid presentation, taxes the audience as he "belabors the minds of the jury with blow after blow" (20.3). In short, figures, both individually and in combination, are significant because of their intended effect: they transport the hearer, add vividness to discourse, and stir the minds of the hearers. Figures play a vital role in both conveying and producing emotion and transporting the audience to the scene being described.

Words that Captivate (Subl. 30–38)

Longinus turns to the analysis of diction in *Subl.* 30. Earlier in the treatise, Longinus explains that "nobility of phrase (ἡ γενναία φράσις)"[52] consists of word choice (ὀνομάτων...ἐκλογή), proper use of metaphor (ἡ τροπική), and elaborate diction (πεποιημένη λέξις) (*Subl.* 8.1). Unfortunately, the damaged state of the manuscript leaves major portions of Longinus's fuller evaluation of diction inaccessible.[53]

The extant manuscript tradition leaves only Longinus's introductory words about the nature and effect of word choice.[54] Beautiful words are the "very light of thought (φῶς...τοῦ νοῦ)" (31.1). Word choice adds to discourse "grandeur, beauty, a classical flavor,

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[52] In ancient considerations of style, ἡ φράσις and ἡ λέξις overlap and are sometimes used interchangeably. Richard Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer in systematischer Ubersicht* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963) signals such ambiguity in his introduction to considerations of style in ancient rhetorical theory: "...the theory of expression (Ausdruck) or of presentation (Darstellung), is called by the Greeks φράσις, often λέξις, rarely ἀπαγγελία or ἑρμνεία, is called *elocutio* by the Romans" (393; my translation). Often, ἡ φράσις is employed in a more comprehensive way to denote a manner of speaking or writing, such as "poetic φράσις" (see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lys.* 3; Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.2.6) or the φράσις of a particular author or orator (see Plutarch, *Comp. Arist. Men. compend.* 853D).

[53] Lacunae in *Subl.* 30–35 have truncated Longinus's discussion of word choice. A sizable digression in Subl. 33–36 further reduces Longinus's discussion of the fourth source. An additional lacuna of about two pages leaves absent Longinus's words about "illustration and imagery (αἱ παραβολαί καὶ εἰκόνες)," which he says are closely akin to metaphors (37.1). Longinus does return, however, to a discussion of elaborate diction with a consideration of hyperbole in *Subl.* 38.

[54] Following a lacuna of approximately four pages, Longinus brings his consideration of the effects of vulgar and elegant words to a conclusion (*Subl.* 31.1–2).

weight, force, strength, and a sort of glittering charm." As with the other sources of sublime rhetoric, however, Longinus traces how word choice can result in certain effects that resemble those of sublime rhetoric more generally:

> It is probably superfluous to explain at length to those who know, how the choice of the right word and the fine word (ἡ τῶν κυρίων καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶν ὀναμάτων) moves the hearers marvelously (θαυμαστῶς ἄγει) and casts a spell on them (κατακηλεῖ τοὺς ἀκούοντας) and how all orators and historians make this their supreme object. (*Subl.* 30.1)

Word choice contributes in no small way to the stirring effects of sublime rhetoric as it "moves" them marvelously. Likewise, the right word can reduce the agency of the hearers as it "casts a spell" on them. It comes as no surprise, then, that Longinus asserts that the virtues of word choice can transform facts—central to rational argumentation—into a "living voice" (31.1) that moves beyond persuasion.

Longinus also considers of the role of hyperbole (ἡ ὑπερβολή) (38.1). At this point in the treatise, the advice for the proper use of hyperbole is not surprising: it must be used carefully with a focus on its intended effect; and, it is best used when it is concealed by emotion or when it aligns closely with the immediate context. To illustrate this, Longinus contrasts the failure of Isocrates with the success of Thucydides and Herodotus.[55] Longinus notes the correspondence between *what* is being said and *how* one says it: "...Herodotus does not seem to have introduced the incident to justify the hyperbole, but the hyperbole seems the natural outcome of the incident" (38.4). He then marks the conclusion of Herodotus's successful use of hyperbole with a restatement of a general rule: events and feelings (τὰ ἔργα καὶ πάθη) that approach the ecstatic effect of sublime rhetoric (ἐγγὺς ἐκστάσεως) (38.5) disguise the use of stylistic devices that might otherwise weaken the piece of writing.

Despite the damaged state of the text, *Subl.* 30–38 provides key insight into

[55] Isocrates overshoots the intended effect of hyperbole in *Paneg.* 8 because his hyperbole is so apparent (*Subl.* 38.2). In contrast, the descriptions of Thucydides and Herodotus succeed because the nature of the warfare scenes they describe and the emotions that arise from them are so vivid (38.3–4).

Longinus's understanding of the nature and effect of sublime rhetoric. Throughout this section, he emphasizes how aspects of diction (word choice, metaphor, and hyperbole) relate and can produce the intended effects of sublime rhetoric. The right word (31.1), the timely use of metaphor (32.4), and the proper use of hyperbole (35.5) all can decenter a hearer. As with the effective use of figures discussed in the previous section, Longinus emphasizes the role of emotion in concealing the intentional selection of words and the use of metaphor and hyperbole; ultimately, such diversionary tactics augment the effects of these features. Finally, Longinus insists that style align with the context or scene being described to achieve the intended effects of sublime rhetoric.

Enchanting Word Arrangement (Subl. 39–43)

In *Subl.* 39, Longinus turns to the final source of sublime rhetoric, the arrangement of words (ἡ τῶν λόγων αὐτῶν ποιὰ σύνθεσις), which he compares to the melody of musical instruments (39) and to the human body's different members (40).[56] Inadequate arrangement arises from "weak and agitated rhythm" (41.1) and "extreme conciseness" (42.1).[57] As has been true throughout the treatise, Longinus focuses his analysis as much on the characteristics of dignified word arrangement as he does on the potential effects that such arrangement has on the hearer.

Longinus says that word arrangement (ἡ σύνθεσις) is a "kind of melody of words" (39.3), emphasizing the aural features of a text and their effect on the hearers.[58] The melody

[56] In the discussion that follows, I will focus my analysis on melody. The analogy of the body allows Longinus to call attention to the role of phrases or sentences in composition. Just as the members of the body are useless when separate but form a "perfect organism" when brought together, so the proper coordination (ἐπισύνθεσις) of the members of a sentence gives it grandeur (*Subl.* 40.1). The use of periodic sentences is particularly apt for attaining such excellence (40.2).

[57] Consideration of inadequate arrangement prompts Longinus's additional reflection on the negative effects of trivial words (*Subl.* 43). For an evaluation of how this chapter fits within the treatise as a whole, see Innes, "Structure and Unity."

[58] To illustrate this, Longinus analyses a sentence from Demosthenes: "This decree made the peril at that time encompassing the country pass away like as a cloud" (*Subl.* 39.4). Longinus argues that modifying even a single syllable would demean its grandeur and weakens its rhythmic structure. The nature of Longinus's analysis and manipulation of the sentence from Demosthenes remains obscure to the modern reader. Russell concludes that this "very difficult passage" and that "all interpretation of aesthetic judgments of this kind

of words plays an important role in fulfilling each of the three offices of oratory (persuading, pleasing, and moving). He explains that melody is not only an instrument of persuasion and pleasure—the first two offices of the orator—but also of "grandeur and emotion" (39.1), two important aspects of the third office (moving) and important components of sublime rhetoric.[59] As with the allusion to the three offices earlier in the treatise, it is the third office that most concerns Longinus. He likens the moving effects of melodious word arrangement to the effects created by melody in music. The melody of the flute, for instance, induces emotions in the hearers, carries them away (ἔκφρων), and fills them with divine frenzy (κορυβαντιασμός) (39.2). Similarly, the melody of the harp casts a spell (θέλγητρον) on its hearers (39.2). Although Longinus does not elaborate, we may assume that the "spell" of the harp resembles the dominating effects of the flute noted above. Like the effects of the melodies of musical instruments, the melodic arrangement of words has the capacity to move the hearers outside of themselves. It stirs a myriad of ideas in the hearers' minds; it enables them to share in the emotions of the speaker or writer; it casts a spell on them; and, it turns their thoughts "toward what is majestic and dignified and sublime and all else that it embraces (πρὸς ὄγκον τε καὶ ἀξίωμα καὶ ὕψος καὶ πᾶν ὃ ἐν αὑτῇ)" (39.3). The melody of words, simply put, has the potential to overpower the mind of the hearer (παντοίως ἡμῶν τῆς διανοίας ἐπικρατοῦσαν) (39.3).

Longinus brings his discussion of arrangement, and the five sources of sublime rhetoric, to a close with a general statement about sublime rhetoric:

> There is, however, no immediate need for enumerating and classifying all the factors of mean style (τὰ μικροποιὰ). As we have already laid down all the qualities that make our utterance noble and sublime (εὐγενεῖς καὶ ὑψηλούς), it obviously follows that the opposite of these will generally make it trivial (ταπεινοὺς ποιήσει) and ungainly (ἀχήμονας). (*Subl.* 43.6)

Longinus's summation of sublime rhetoric as the opposite of anything trivial and ungainly

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[i.e. trying to understand what Longinus means here] must inevitably be guessing in the dark" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 175). Regardless, it is clear that sublime rhetoric concerns the aural quality of its arrangement.

[59] See also n25 above (p. 42).

sheds new light on the moral and spatial valence of sublime rhetoric elsewhere in the treatise. Elsewhere, there is a similar overlap between moral elevation and spatial elevation. Sublime rhetoric uplifts the soul (7.2); it allows its authors and hearers to contemplate divine things (35.2–5); and, it lifts its authors up to mind of God (36.3). The opposite of sublime rhetoric is articulated in similar ways: it cannot be produced by "petty and servile" authors (9.3); extreme conciseness has a lowering effect (42.1) and trivial words are debasing (43.1).

This moral and spatial connotation lends an additional purpose or function to the intended effects of sublime rhetoric. Sublime rhetoric, through its five sources and their combination, is intended to dislocate the hearers and move them closer to divine things and the mind of God.[60] This spatial and moral dimension of sublime rhetoric provides an important frame for discussing the final chapter of the extant treatise.

Longinus and the Philosopher (Subl. 44)

The final chapter of the treatise, as I mentioned above, recounts a conversation between Longinus and unnamed philosopher. The two explore the cause of cultural decline in their generation. The philosopher queries Longinus concerning the lack of literary genius in their contemporary generation:

> "It surprises me," he said, "as it doubtless surprises many others too, how it is that in this age of ours we find natures that are supremely persuasive (πιθαναί) and suited for public life, shrewd and versatile and especially rich in literary charm (πρὸς ἡδονὰς λόγων), yet really sublime and transcendent natures (ὑφηλαὶ δὲ λίαν καὶ ὑπερμεγέθεις) are no longer, or only very rarely, now produced. Such a world-wide dearth of literature besets our times." (*Subl.* 44.1)

Two aspects of the philosopher's question deserve comment. First, the philosopher adopts the treatise's earlier dichotomy between persuasive rhetoric and sublime rhetoric: there

[60] See Hill, "Aesthetic Principles." Hill argues that the spatial images related to ὕψος lose any material or figural sense and become metaphysical categories in the treatise. Consequently, he likens Longinus to a theologian whose view of ὕψος relates more to metaphysics than literary criticism or rhetoric. Hill concludes that the author is "a Platonist who is concerned with the use of language in the service of an ultimately spiritual ideal" (274).

are many persuasive and charming orators but few who move audiences beyond persuasion. Second, the philosopher's observation about the "world-wide dearth of literature" resembles a commonplace assumption in the first and second centuries CE about a general state of cultural decline.[61] The philosopher also offers a commonplace rationale for this decline: the loss of freedom afforded by democracy.[62] The philosopher names democracy the "kindly nurse of genius" (44.2), which provides the ideal environment for the acquisition and development of the gifts of oratory (44.3). Third, the philosopher adopts Longinus's earlier conflation of moral and spatial elevation. He states that while past generations have experienced freedom, his generation experiences a form of slavery that has shaped them "in servile ways and practices" (44.3). In the absence of freedom, the human soul is encaged and trapped within a "common prison" (44.5).

Longinus offers a different explanation for the cultural decline and, as it were, the source of the soul's imprisonment. It is not the loss of freedom, but the "endless warfare" of the passions that results in the enslavement of the human soul (44.6). Vicious living results in an "insatiable sickness" that enslaves the soul and sinks it into the depths (44.6).[63] In this demeaned and captive state, people fail to "look upward (ἀναβλέπω)" and their "greatness of soul (τὰ ψυχικὰ μεγέθη)" wastes away as they "neglect the development of their immortal soul" (44.8). In his concluding words, Longinus generalizes the cause of the diminished spirit of his present generation as apathy (ἡ ῥαθυμία), a persistent disregard for what really matters and unwillingness to make progress in virtue (*Subl.* 44.1).[64] In other words, Longinus offers a wholly moral explanation for his generation's cultural decline and

[61] Tacitus, writing late in the first-century CE, begins *A Dialogue on Oratory* with a piercing question, "How is it that, whereas former ages were so prolific of great orators, men of genius and renown, on our generation a signal blight has fallen?" (*Dial.* 1 [LCL: Peterson]). For a broader discussion, see E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkely; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1951), 236–69.

[62] See also: Tacitus, *Dial.* 39 "Why, just as with blood-horses it takes a roomy track to show their mettle, so orators need a spacious field in which to expatiate without let or hindrance, if their eloquence is not to lose all its strength and pith" (LCL: Peterson).

[63] The particular vices enumerated by Longinus will be discussed more fully in chapter five.

[64] The meaning of ῥαθυμία and its relationship to the treatise as a whole will be more fully discussed in chapter five.

loss of genius. At the same time, he implies that the intended effects of sublime rhetoric—its ability to transport, to stir the emotions, and to overwhelm—function as an antidote to the apathy (ῥαθυμία), as they move the hearers from (ἐκ) this state (στάσις) of apathy so that they lift their eyes to consider and pursue what really matters.

Sublime Rhetoric and the Limits of Excellent Style

In the middle of his discussion of diction, Longinus makes an important detour that relates to sublime rhetoric's ability to "lift the eyes" of the hearers (*Subl.* 33–36). The basic point of his digression is easily discerned and consistent throughout: sublime rhetoric is not necessarily characterized by "perfect precision" in language (33.2). Rather, Longinus accepts as natural the fact that technical and stylistic mistakes will accompany the expressions of sublime rhetoric (33.4). Longinus returns to the dichotomy between nature and art made earlier in the treatise (8.1) to justify sublime rhetoric's technical and stylistic missteps:

> In art (ἐπὶ τέχνης) we admire accuracy (τὸ ἀκριβέστατον), in nature (ἐπὶ τῶν φυσικῶν ἔργων) grandeur (τὸ μέγεθος); and it is nature (φύσει) that has given man the power of using words. Also we expect a statue to resemble a man, but in literature, as I have said before, we look for something greater than human. (*Subl.* 36.4)

The potential errors of these authors can be excused because of the profound impact their writing has on subsequent hearers: they introduce hearers to "something greater" than humanity.

Once again, it is the intended effect of sublime rhetoric that permits these stylistic missteps. The technical excellencies of Hypereides, which are superior to those of Demosthenes, fail to attain to the desired effects of sublime rhetoric; they "are dispassionate, born of sober sense." Above all, they "do not trouble" the audience (34.4). Hypereides fails because his writing does not lead the audience to become "panic stricken;" it lacks the "sublime intensity, living emotion, redundance, readiness, and speed" of sublime rhetoric (34.4). Demosthenes is again championed for his "vehemence and power."

This power is shown in the effect he has on the audience: he is able to "dumbfound" them and foster an intense emotional response in them (34.4).

The demotion of stylistic and technical perfection by Longinus leads him to praise other authors, who are attuned to humanity's natural inclination toward greatness and divinity, though they may scorn "detailed accuracy" (35.1). Such authors have answered Nature's call to participate in the "great gathering" and to become spectators of the cosmos (35.2). Their powers of contemplation and insight (θεωρία καὶ διάνοια) move them beyond the limits of the universe (35.3). Sublime rhetoric lifts them "near the mighty mind of God" and earns them admiration beyond human approbation (36.1). Their greatness, moreover, enables the hearers to transcend their own human limits. They are able to draw out of other people humanity's natural inclination for the divine (35.2).[65] Their powers of contemplation broaden the contemplative capacities of the hearers so that they too can move beyond earthly realities (35.3). The superior character of previous authors enables their readers to "realize the object" of their own creation (35.4).

The writers of old, despite their technical missteps, captivate those who read and hear their voices. Sublime rhetoric, in this case, both originates in the superhuman capacity of its authors and results in the audience's own transcendence of human limits. It is, as Longinus notes earlier, this incredible (τὸ παράδοξον) quality of the authors of old that wins the wonder (θαυμαστόν) of those who experience their writing (35.5).

Conclusion

In the preceding analysis of *De Sublimitate*, I have adopted the phrase "sublime rhetoric" to describe Longinus' discussion of the nature, intended effects, and use of

[65] The contents of *Subl.* 35–36 provide some of the most overtly religious language in the whole treatise. Longinus draws on Stoic and Platonic assumptions about humanity and divinity to describe the character of previous authors. Russell comments: "The themes of this passage are for the most part philosophical commonplaces, some Stoic in origin, some Platonic or even Pythagorean. L [Longinus] is a typical, though unoriginal, witness to a type of piety and moral reflection which formed the common spiritual fare of the educated in the first two centuries or so of the Empire" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 165).

ὕψος/τὸ ὑψηλόν in discourse. Sublime rhetoric evokes powerful emotions in the hearer (8.1), especially those related to awe (9.7; 9.11; 9.13; 10.5). Sublime rhetoric relates to matters of style, such as the proper use of figures, the selection of words, and their arrangement. Nevertheless, it cannot be reduced to the virtues of stylistic excellence. Sublime rhetoric describes "not a manner of writing but an effect," as Russell pointed out decades ago.[66] Sublime rhetoric overpowers; it dominates; it entrances; it shocks; it transports; it inspires. Sublime rhetoric, in the view of Longinus, is adequately described as a "living voice" that encounters hearers in powerful ways. In these different articulations, Longinus insists that sublime rhetoric leads to *ekstasis*—the dislocation of the hearers from their immediate setting into the world of the text and the stirring of the hearers from a state of apathy to one of progress.

Strikingly, these effects and experiences come as result of encounters with texts. Through appeals to the emotions and the imagination, through disconnected syntax and the timely use of figures, sublime rhetoric concerns what great writing *does* to its hearers. Though subtle, Longinus connects the striking, moving, inspiring power of sublime rhetoric with the moral and ethical condition of the hearers: sublime rhetoric reconnects the hearers with what really matters and awakens them from the stupor of immoral living. Longinus borrows religious language and ideas to express the intended effects of sublime rhetoric, including inspiration (8.4; 13.2; 14.2; 15.1–2; 32.4); the communication of divine realities (9.5, 8, 9); and, the contemplation of extra-worldly realities (35.2, 3; 36.3). In addition to tracing the intended effects of sublime rhetoric, *De Sublimitate* also provides an important insight into the capacity of language. For Longinus, the five sources of sublime rhetoric transform the words of ancient authors into living and inspiring voices that confront and reorient hearers generations after they were recorded.

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[66] Russell, *'Longinus'*, xliii.

There is much in the treatise—highlighted especially by its subsequent reception[67]—that resembles the ancient analysis of style. It is the purpose of the next chapter to locate Longinus's view of sublime rhetoric—and his emphasis on its intended effecs and the powerful potential of language more generally—within ancient analyses of style.

[67] For an overview of this reception, see the Appendix.

Chapter Three: *De Sublimitate*, Theories of Style, and the Power of Language

I now set out to show the distinctive place of *De Sublimitate* within the ancient analysis of style.[1] I consider discussions of style in rhetorical and literary treatises commencing with Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the fourth-century BCE and ending with Hermogenes's *On the Types of Style*, written at end of the second-century or the beginning of the third-century CE.[2] *De Sublimitate* shares some of the basic components of an analysis of style: the discussion of word choice, sentence composition, and the use of figures resembles those found in several ancient treatises. Likewise, the connection between what is said and how it is said plays an important role both in *De Sublimitate* and in several other theories of style.

Comparing *De Sublimitate* with other theories of style brings to light its unique perspectives. Among the writings surveyed, there is widespread agreement that questions of style depend on the central goal of persuasion. The need to know what to say and how to say it relate utlimately to the speaker's ability to persuade the audience. It is all the more surprising, then, that *De Sublimitate* insists that elements of style in sublime rhetoric

[1] For an overview of considerations of style in Hellenistic rhetorical theory, see Galen O. Rowe, “Style,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997) 121–157. Rowe provides a comprehensive list of stylistic features and devices. See also Lausberg, *Handbook*, 215–478 (§§453–1082). For more general surveys of ancient literary criticism (including discussions of style), see J.W.H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934); Grube, *Greek and Roman Critics*; D.A. Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

[2] The Latin theorist, Quintilian, will not figure prominently in my discussion. His value to the study of ancient rhetoric is in the comprehensiveness of his synthesis, not in his originality. See Russell, "General Introduction," in the LCL edition of Quintilian's Institutes: it is the "comprehensiveness of this synthesis that makes the *Institutio* unique among ancient works on rhetoric" (5). Similarly, Russell's definitive treatment of ancient theories of style does not provide sustained discussion of Quintilian. Quintilian is mentioned only in connection with earlier theorists (e.g. Cicero) in Volkmann's overview of the types or characters of style in ancient theory; see Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik*, 393–409. For an overview of Quintilian's *Institutio* and its analysis of style, see Grube, *Greek and Roman Critics*, 284–307, esp. 294–302, 306–7; George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric: An Extensive Revision and Abridgement of The Art of Persuasion in Greece, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, and Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors with Additional Discussion of Late Latin Rhetoric* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 177–86. Like Quintilian, Hermogenes's treatise will play only a minor role in my analysis.

indicate a discursive function that does something in addition to or more than convince the audience. As will become apparent below, Longinus's emphasis intended effects of sublime rhetoric highlighted in the previous chapter has only a slight affinity with other theories of style.

The survey below explores as well how well Longinus's understanding of ὕψος aligns with the various types or characters of style classified in ancient theories. In other words, is ὕψος simply another word for one of the ancient characters of style. Despite some possible affinities, this seems unlikely. For example, the nature and intended effects of sublime rhetoric do not easily align with the simplicity and grammatical precision demanded by many theories of the ideal style. Similarly, Longinus's positive regard for using several metaphors and other figures of speech would, in the view of others theorists, result in a style that is too artificial for the standards of the so-called plain style. Yet, Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric does not align much better with ancient views of the grand or elevated style.

I begin with a broad consideration of the ancient analysis of style, including a overview of the components evaluated and the various types of style identified in them. Then, I consider how notions of the grand style compare to the perspectives of *De Sublimitate*. Finally, I pursue how other ancient writers—not just literary and rhetorical theorists—account for the powerful capacity of discourse and texts.

De Sublimitate and the Ancient Analysis of Style

Like much of ancient rhetorical and literary criticism, the analysis of style involves both the retention and modification of previous views. Ancient theories of style are both practical and critical—practical in that they seek to improve the style of the speaker (or writer) who follows the guidelines set forth in the theory; critical because the guidelines for style emerge from comparative analysis of the styles of past authors and orators.

Eventually, the attention to previous speakers and writers leads to an association of various types of style with representative figures from antiquity.[3]

Questions of style focus on a basic connection between what to say and how to say it, as mentioned above. Aristotle, for example, recognizes that it is not sufficient to know what to say, which is the task of invention. One must also know *how* to say it (*Rhet.* 3.1.2), which concerns the form of language (style) and elocution (delivery). Somewhat begrudgingly, Aristotle concedes that there is a "slight necessity to pay attention to style" (*Rhet.* 3.1.6).[4] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing toward the end of the period under consideration, retains the same basic distinction made by Aristotle, but his analysis of style is more expansive. Dionysius divides oratory into ὁ πραγματικός (subject matter) and ὁ λεκτικός (style).[5] The first of these, ὁ πραγματικός, includes invention (ἡ εὕρεσις), arrangement (ἡ τάξις), and the development of the argument (ἡ ἐξεργασία) (*Lys.* 15).[6] The second, ὁ λεκτικός, focuses on the form of language and its intended effects. Although several of the theorists surveyed maintain a similar distinction between the subject matter and style, they do not agree completely on the various components that determine style.

Components of Style

Theories of style subsequent to Aristotle expand upon his discussion, particularly in their elaboration of the components of style. Aristotle identifies four virtues (ἀρεταί) of style for oratory: clarity, purity, ornamentation, and propriety. The first two virtues (clarity and purity) concern the use of clear and ordinary language (*Rhet*. 3.2.1). Oratorical style requires attention to word choice—avoiding mean or abnormal and artificial words—

[3] See, for example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s *The Ancient Orators*.

[4] His analysis of style in oratory connects with his earlier considerations of style in poetry, although he insists that the two genres require different styles (*Rhet*. 3.1.8).

[5] For λέξις/λεκτικός, see *Lys.* 2–14; *Isocr.* 2–3; *Is.* 2–3, 7, 9, 14; *Thuc.* 22–33; *Comp.* 2–4. For πραγματικός, see *Lys.* 15; *Isocr.* 4; *Is.* 3, 14; *Thuc.* 9–20. In *Pomp*., Dionysius notes that Plato's critique of Lysias depends on these two basic categories (*Pomp.* 1). Similarly, Dionysius's analysis of Xenophon begins with πραγματικός and then concludes with consideration of λεκτικός (*Pomp.* 4).

[6] Elsewhere, Dionysius includes other items to be considered under πραγματικός, including the selection of appropriate material, division of material, use of variety in oratory, and the important role of digressions (*Isocr*. 4).

and the use of language that is grammatically precise and pure (*Rhet.* 3.5.1). The third virtue, which he addresses only briefly, determines the means of effectively adding ornamentation to discourse (*Rhet.* 3.6.1.).[7] The fourth virtue, propriety (τὸ πρέπον), demands that style align with the subject matter, the emotions of the speaker and audience, and the character of the speaker (*Rhet.* 3.7.1).[8] While Aristotle's identification of the four virtues of style appears in subsequent theories,[9] it is the expansion of the third virtue (ornamentation) that is of greatest concern for this discussion.

Aristotle's student, Theophrastus, identifies three components of ornamentation: word choice, sentence arrangement, and the use of figures.[10] The Latin treatise *Rhetorica ad Herennium* demonstrates significant correspondence to the system of Theophrastus. The anonymous author discusses ornamentation as it relates to the selection of words, the formation of sentences, and the use of figures (*Rhet. Her.* 1.3).[11] Dionysius of Halicarnassus focuses primarily on these three components as well in his discussion of style (ὁ λεκτικός). At the most basic level, Dionysius judges style on the basis of the selection of words (ἡ ἐκλογή τῶν ὀνομάτων), their arrangement (ἡ σύνθεσις), and the use of figures (τὰ

[7]Aristotle discusses description instead of naming an object, metaphors and epithets, substituting the plural for the singular, articles, connecting particles, and negative description. The ideal amount of ornamentation or "loftiness of style" (ὄγκος τῆς λέξεως) is found as a midway point between a concise style and a poetic style.

[8] For example, weighty subjects (περὶ εὐόγκων) must be treated with dignity (σεμνῶς) and trivial matters (περὶ εὐτελῶν) must eschew embellishment (κόσμος) (*Rhet*. 3.7.2). Style achieves propriety of character when language fits the "class and habit" of the speaker (*Rhet*. 3.7.7). Propriety of emotion refers to the appropriate expression of emotion to a given situation. Properly expressed, emotion aids persuasion, making the speech credible and enabling the hearer to share in the emotion of the speaker (*Rhet*. 3.7.3–4).

[9] E.g. Cicero, *De or.* 1.144–145; 3.37ff.: purity (3.38–47), clarity (3.49–52), ornament (3.91), and propriety (3.91). See also Quintilian, *Instit.* 8.1 (purity of language), 8.2 (lucidity), 8.3–10.7 (ornament), and 11.1 (propriety).

[10] *Apud* Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Isocr.* 3: "There are altogether three means, according to Theophrastus, by which grandeur, dignity and impressiveness (τὸ μέγα καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ περιττὸν) are achieved in style (ἐν λέξει): the choice of words (τῆς τε ἐκλογῆς τῶν ὀνομάτων), their melodious arrangement (τῆς ἐκ τούτων ἁρμονίας), and the figures of speech in which they are set (τῶν περιλαμβανόντων αὐτὰ σχημάτων)" (LCL: Usher). See further Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 79.

[11] For word choice and arrangement, see *Rhet. Her.* 1.3. The author devotes a significant portion of the treatise to the discussion of figures, which he distinguishes as figures of speech and figures of thought (*Rhet. Her.* 4.18). The author's discussion of forty-five figures of speech (*Rhet. Her.* 4.19–46) and nineteen figures of thought (*Rhet. Her.* 4.47–69) accounts for nearly one quarter of the whole treatise.

σχῆμα/σχηματίζω).[12]

Other theories of style identify different components of ornamentation. Writing after Theophrastus, Demetrius's treatise *On Style*[13] identifies three components of style, but these differ from those named by Theophrastus. He discusses thought, diction, and sentence arrangement.[14] The *Rhetorica ad Herrennium*, mentioned above, also resembles the view of Demetrius in its description of the different characters of style: each results from attention to the subject matter, word choice, and word arrangement (*Rhet. Her.* 1.3).[15] Unlike Theophrastus and the *Rhetorica ad Herrennium*, however, Demetrius treats figures in his discussion of sentence arrangement, not as a separate component.

Cicero limits ornamentation to the consideration of language and thought (*ex verbis*

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[12] See *Comp.* 1. Dionysius attributes this basic understanding of λεκτικός to Theophrastus (*Isocr.* 3). His application of the components of λεκτικός appears clearly in his analysis of Isocrates's style: "Isocrates chooses (ἐκλογέω) his words very well, and uses the best possible; but his arrangement (ἁρμόζω) of them is laboured because he is striving after musical effect. His use of figures (σχηματίζω) is crude, and its effect is usually frigid: they are either far-fetched or inappropriate to their subject-matter, both faults being the result of his failure to achieve artistic moderation" (*Isocr.* 3; see also *Thuc.* 24). In places, Dionysius attends only to word choice and arrangement (see *Demos.* 51; *Thuc.* 22; *Comp.* 2; *Din.* 6). Dionysius characterizes the arrangement of the words as more important and potentially powerful than their selection (*Demos.* 51; *Comp.* 4).

In other treatises, Dionysius adds to these three basic components of style the analysis of subject matter (*Demos.* 21, 24), the role of the emotions (*Demos.* 21), and the the adoption of rhythmic structure in prose (*Thuc.* 23). In *Pomp.* 5, he includes the analysis of enthymemes, periodic structure, and attitude under λεκτικός.

[13] The treatise was likely written in the 3rd century BCE has been traditionally attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum. For an overview of questions related to the date and authorship of *De Elocutione*, see Grube, *Greek and Roman Critics*, 39–56. In addition to Grube, the introduction by Roberts to the first edition of *De Elocutione* in the LCL series and that by Doreen C. Innes to the second edition are also helpful.

[14] See *Eloc.* 38. Demetrius discusses each of the four characters of style with a focus on these three components:

	Thought:	Diction:	Composition:
Elevated	§§75–75	§§77–113	§§38–74
Elegant	§§156–172	§§173–178	§§179–185
Plain	§§190	§§190–191	§§204–208
Forcible	§§240	§§272–286	§§241–271

[15] The actual analysis is unbalanced. Only the description of the grand style includes the explicit analysis of all three component parts of style (subject matter, word choice, and sentences). The discussion of the middle and plain styles concerns questions of word choice alone with little consideration of alignment with the subject matter.

et ex sententiis) (*Opt. Gen.* 4).[16] His discussion of language resembles Aristotle's virtues: it should be faultless and pure, proper words should be chosen, and metaphors and comparison should be used sparingly (*Opt. Gen.* 4). The words should be arranged on the basis of two desired effects: rhythm and smoothness (*Opt. Gen.* 5). Cicero provides more insight into the analysis of thoughts and their relationship to style than Demetrius. He identifies three kinds of thoughts—the "pointed," the "bright and witty," and the "weighty and impressive"—that are paired with the three "offices" of the orator (to teach, to entertain, and to move).[17] Unfortunately, Cicero, provides little elaboration of the relationship between the three types of thought and the production of the desired effects on the audience.

This brief overview suggests broad similarities between *De Sublimitate*'s discussion of the five sources of sublime rhetoric and the ancient analysis of style. On one hand, the final three sources of sublime rhetoric (figures, diction, and word arrangement) align closely with the three components of ornamentation first outlined by Theophrastus and found later in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Dionysius of Halicarnassus's critical works. On the other hand, the treatise's identification of ideas as the first source of sublime rhetoric resembles the consideration of thought or subject matter in the theories of Demetrius, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Cicero. Cicero's identification of three kinds of thoughts and their correspondence to the three offices of the orator offers as an important point of comparison with *De Sublimitate*, especially with regard to third office (to move) and its accompanying style. With the various components of style in mind, I turn next to attempts to define different types of style.

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[16] Elsewhere, Cicero's understanding of style resembles the three-part theory of Theophrastus. See *Or. Brut.* 134–139: Cicero treats three components of ornamentation: word choice (134), combination of words (135), and the use of figures (136–138).

[17] For the three offices of the orator, see *Opt. Gen.* 3, 5, 16; *Or. Brut.* 83.

Classifying Types of Style

The analysis of style tends toward increased systematization and expansion after Aristotle, including attempts to classify and describe different types of style. These theories of style differ both in terms of the number of styles identified and the names given to them. For example, Aristophanes's *The Frogs* introduces two basic styles, the grand and not-grand or plain style, by comparing the styles of Euripides and Aeschylus. The treatise *On Style* by Demetrius, however, identifies four characters of style: the plain (ἰσχνός), the elevated (μεγαλοπρεπής), the elegant (γλαφυρός), and the forcible (δεινός).[18] The Latin treatise *Rhetorica ad Herennium* names three types of style—the grand, the simple, and the middle (*gravis*, *mediocrem*, *extenuatam*).[19] Vestiges of the three-part schema are found in subsequent theories, including Cicero,[20] Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[21] and Quintilian.[22] Finally, Hermogenes initially identifies seven basic types of style (*Id.* 218, 225 [Rabe]), but then introduces a number of subtypes, resulting in a discussion of twenty types of style.[23]

While treatises from the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods indicate a renewed interest in the analysis of style and the adoption of the three-part schema, this period also attests to a greater demand for *one* style in oratory—namely, one that is clear, straight forward, and free from embellishment. Due to the more elaborate and free-flowing nature of the so-called Asianic style, proponents of the Attic style championed the virtues

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[18] *Eloc*. 36–37. With the exception of an evaluation of periodic structure in the opening, the treatise is devoted to the four characters of style: elevated (38–127), elegant (128–189), plain (190–235), and forcible (240–304).

[19] The ideal orator does not employ one type of style, but combines them: "But in speaking we should vary the type of style, so that the middle succeeds the grand and the simple the middle, and then again interchange them, and yet again. Thus, by means of the variation, satiety is easily avoided" (*Rhet. Her.* 4.16).

[20] See, e.g., Cicero, *Opt. Gen.* 2.

[21] See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Demos.* 33.

[22] See Quintilian, *Instit.* 12.10.58.

[23] Cecil Wooten, who has translated the treatise into English, makes the following observation: "...it is quite clear that *On Types of Style* is the *culmination* of a tendency in Greek rhetorical criticism to refine *more and more* the concept of stylistic virtues that had been begun by Theophrastus." See Cecil W Wooten, ed., *Hermogenes' On Types of Style* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), xvii (emphasis is added).

of clarity, purity of language, and conciseness associated with Aristotle.[24] To proponents of the Attic style, simplicity represented the pragmatic, and above all, truthful ideals of oratory. In contrast, the over-embellishment and obvious stylistic flare simply masked the deceptive purposes of the the Asianic style and those who employed it.

Two of the most important theorists of the time—Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus—establish their views of style in opposition to the opulence and misleading qualities of the Asianic style.[25] Yet, they do so incompletely, since both attempt to salvage the legacy of Demosthenes. Long-regarded as the *ideal* orator, Demosthenes's style presented problems for rigorous advocates of the Attic style. Many of the features which earned him fame as an orator—his raw, disjointed, emotional, and at times figured discourse—moved beyond the standards of Attic simplicity. Even as proponents of the Attic style insist on simplicity and clarity, there remains an important impulse to preserve and imitate the style of Demosthenes, and especially its desired effects, in several theories of style. With this broad overview in mind, I consider the classifications of style offered by different theorists.

(i) Aristophanes: The Grand and the Not-Grand

The first example of the classification of styles that I discuss does not occur in a rhetorical or literary treatise but in *The Frogs* by Aristophanes.[26] Midway through the comedy, the protagonist Dionysus and his slave observe a contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in the underworld. Aeschylus and Euripides are posturing before Pluto with hopes that one of them might occupy the "Chair of Tragedy" (*Ran.* 770). A slave of Pluto

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[24] See, e.g., Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 51, 325. For an overview of the Asianic-Attic controversy, see Wisse, "Rise of Atticism;" the articles "Asianism" and "Atticism" by Gualtiero Calboli in *Brill's New Pauly* (see above, p. 40n10); Stephen C. Colvin, "Atticist-Asianist Controversy," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (ed. Thomas O. Sloane; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 57–59; John M. Crossett and James A. Arieti, *The Dating of Longinus* (University Park, PA: Dept. of Classics, Pennsylvania State University, 1975), 4, 41–42.

[25] Cicero's writings reveal that he has been embroiled in the controversy at a personal level. In more than one place, he defends himself against the charges of resembling the Asianic style himself. See Cicero's far from objective description of the "true" Attic style in *Or. Brut.* 23–32.

[26] Unless otherwise noted, quotations and translations of Aristophanes are those of Aristophanes, *Frogs* (trans. Jeffrey Henderson; LCL 180; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2002).

explains that Aeschylus had occupied the chair before Euripides's descent to the underworld. Since his arrival, however, Euripides has begun to vie for that honor. After the slave informs Dionysus and the reader of this background, Aristophanes recounts the contest between the two tragedians. Dionysus acts as the judge of the artistic contest, which lasts for the remainder of *The Frogs*. For all its light-hearted banter, the duel between Euripides and Aeschylus introduces for the first time a basic division of style: the two figures represent the grand and the not-grand (or plain) styles.

The contest between Aeschylus and Euripides begins with a consideration of the ends or purpose of tragedy. Both agree that a play should have a practical and moral purpose. Plays should instruct their hearers and make them better citizens (*Ran.* 1010). According to Aeschylus, the tragedian is like a teacher—but a teacher of grownups, not children (*Ran.* 1055). Previous figures embody this pragmatic value of plays:

> Just consider how beneficial the noble poets have been from the earliest times. Orpheus revealed mystic rites to us, and taught us to abstain from killings; Musaeus instructed us on oracles and cures for diseases; Hesiod on agriculture, the seasons for crops, and ploughing. And where did the godlike Homer get respect and renown if not by giving good instruction in the tactics, virtues, and weaponry of men? (*Ran.* 1030)

Though this is not stated explicitly, Aeschylus reads the poets selectively, culling them for their practical value alone. He fails to mention their mythical content; he omits reference to the immoral behavior and dispositions of the gods as well as their unbecoming relationships with humans.

In the view of Aeschylus, Euripides's plays fail to attain the practical ideals commensurate with the older poets, since they depict the immoral actions of certain characters and influence the audience to lead similarly immoral lives (see *Ran.* 1040, 1045, 1085). Euripides's response does not address the critique completely. He insists that his plays *do* have practical function, but does not deny the immoral actions of his characters. Rather, the depiction of these actions develops rationality and critical thinking as the

hearers learn from those insalubrious actions of characters in the play (*Ran.* 970).

Following Aeschylus's charge against Euripides, Aristophanes next offers Euripides's critique of Aeschylus. His criticism focuses on the negative impact of Aeschylus's style on the audience, not on the moral quality of his plays. Aeschylus is said to mystify (τερατεύομαι) the readers with his tragedies (*Ran.* 834). Because of this, Euripides calls Aeschylus a charlatan and a cheat (ἀλαζών καὶ φέναξ) who deceives (ἐξαπατάω) his audience (*Ran.* 910). At this point in the comedy, Dionysus chimes in, admitting that he himself had been deceived (φενακίζω) by the style of Aeschylus (*Ran.* 920). Though ultimately regarded in a negative way by Euripides, it is important to note that the effects of Aeschylus's style resembles those of sublime rhetoric insofar as they have the capacity to dominate, even mystify the hearers.

The mystifying but ultimately deceptive effects of Aeschylus's plays relate to his style. In the first place, Euripides censures Aeschylus on account of his choice of words. Aeschylus lacks "a single intelligible word," but rather employs "huge craggy utterances that weren't easy to decipher" (*Ran.* 930). His plays are "bloated with bombast and obese vocabulary" (*Ran.* 938). More generally, Euripides bemoans the obscurity of Aeschylus's writing (*Ran.* 1120). He demeans Aeschylus for depicting fantastic scenes: "I never distracted their minds with bombastic bluster, and never tried to shock them by creating Cycnuses and Memnons with bells on their horses' cheek plates" (*Ran.* 960). Aeschylus's plays mislead the audience because his style—the use of strange, bombastic words—aligns with his subject matter—the depiction of fantastic creatures.

Aeschylus's response sets the trajectory for subsequent theories of the grand style. Because he treats "great thoughts and ideas (μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν)," he explains that he must use an equally elevated style. Aeschylus offers an analogy between style and clothing. He justifies his use of "exalted expressions" to describe the demigods since they

"wear much more impressive clothing than we do" (*Ran.* 1060). Style, in this case Aeschylus's use of "exalted expressions," becomes ornamentation that *covers* great thoughts, just as "impressive clothing" covers the demigods.

The exchange between Aeschylus and Euripides illustrates important characteristics in classifying style that will appear in subsequent theories. First, the competition concerns the relationship between form and content, which relates to the goals of tragedy. Both authors affirm the practical and moral value of tragedy, but they accuse the other of failing to attain to such an ideal. The two base their negative judgments of the other, however, on different criteria related to form and content. Aeschylus focuses exclusively on the content of Eupipides's writing. In contrast, Euripides disparages the style of Aeschylus because it fails to instruct in "plain human language" (*Ran.* 1055). Compared to the plain style, the grand style uses rare or impressive words, which may be obscure or circuitous.

Second, the competition reveals an interest in the function or potential effect of the different styles on the hearer, though this is subtler. The plain style is particularly effective at teaching; it applies to rationality, critical thinking, and persuasion.[27] The grand style, while not devoid entirely of these pedagogical functions, fails to teach effectively, at least in the view of Euripides. Rather, the style of Aeschylus misleads and mystifies the audience; it distracts and shocks. Aeschylus does not deny that his plays have these effects on his audience; he simply insists that this style is demanded by the subject matter.

(ii) Demetrius: Four Characters but Two Styles

Demetrius's classification of four characters of style (χαρακτῆρες τῆς ἑρμηνείας) can be understood as an expansion upon the basic distinction between the plain style of Euripides and the grand style of Aeschylus found in Aristophanes.[28] In this view, each of his

[27] Aristophanes connects the plain style with persuasion: "Persuasion is a lightweight thing and has no mind of its own. Try to come up with something else this time, something heavyweight, big and strong enough to depress your pan" (*Ran.* 1395).

[28] See Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity*, 135.

four characters of style would be seen as a subtype to either the plain style or the grand style.

The plain (ἰσχνός) and the elegant (γλαφυρός) resemble the plain style of Euripides. On one hand, the plain character of style aims at clear writing (ἡ σαφὴς γραφή) that shuns ambiguity (*Eloc.* 196). It follows the natural order of words (199) and is particularly well suited for persuasion (ἡ πιθανότης) (208). On the other hand, the elegant (γλαφυρός) style gives pleasure to the hearer (168) and consists of all things related to charm (181). While the elegant style may lack the precision of the plain style (see *Eloc.* 197) and though the two characters have important differences, the ways in which both differ from the other two characters suggests their affinity to one another. As we saw in Aeschylus's *Frogs*, Demetrius connects each character of style with a particular function or intended effect: the plain style leads to persuasion; the elegant style brings pleasure to the hearer.

Demetrius's elevated (μεγαλοπρεπής) and forcible (δεινός) characters coincide more closely with the grand style of Aeschylus. These two styles both select unnatural or difficult words. The elevated chooses words that are hard to pronounce and rugged (48, 49); the forcible likewise employs words that are difficult to pronounce and cacophonous (246, 255). The arrangement of words is equally unnerving. The elevated style uses connective particles that do not correspond nicely (53) and creates an overall sense of gravity through the unnatural, obscure use of language (59, 77, 101). The forcible style is known for its brevity, obscurity, and urgency (241). It employs symbolic expressions (τὰ σύμβολα), which act as a riddle in discourse (243). It draws on figures of speech (anaphora, asyndeton, homoeteleuton) that add intensity to discourse (68). Finally, the desired effects or function of each character of style are similar. The elevated character of style stirs (κινέω) the hearers (39) while the forcible style is unnerving, "sharp and short like the exchange of blows" (274). Both the elevated and the forcible characters of style derive their

distinctiveness from the words they employ, how the words are arranged, and the overall effect of each on the audience. Whether the stirring effect of the elevated or the striking effect of the forcible, both characters of style retain traces of the purported effects of Aeschylus's style described in *The Frogs*.[29]

(iii) The Appearance of Three: The Plain, Elevated, and Middle Styles

As mentioned above, a three-fold classification of style—plain, elevated, and middle or mixed—dominates discussions in handbooks after Demetrius. Scholars have long wondered about the origin of this schema.[30] Whatever its origin, the first extended (and extant) treatment of this tripartite schema occurs in the Latin rhetorical treatise, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.[31] The author introduces the three types of style as follows:

> There are, then, three kinds of style, called types, to which discourse, if faultless, confines itself: the first we call the Grand (*gravis*); the second, the Middle (*mediocrem*); the third, the Simple (*extenuatam*). The Grand type consists of a smooth and ornate arrangement of impressive words. The Middle type consists of words of a lower, yet not of the lowest and most colloquial, class of words. The Simple type is brought down even to the most current idiom of standard speech. (*Rhet. Her.* 4.11)

While the above description suggests each style arises from word choice alone, elsewhere

[29] Demetrius associates various figures from antiquity with each of the four styles. Thucydides personifies the elevated style; Sappho the elegant style; Lysias the plain style; and, Demosthenes the forcible style. Thucydides is only mentioned as a positive example in the discussion of the elevated style; elsewhere in *De Elocutione,* he serves only as the opposite of the elegant style (181) or the plain style (206, 228). Likewise, Demosthenes serves primarily as an example of the forcible style (246, 248, 250, 263, 270, 273, 279, 280), though he also serves as an example of the elegant style (175, 181).

The rigidity of Demetrius's association can be seen more clearly by comparing *De Elocutione* with Longinus's *De Sublimitate*. Not only does Longinus break genre boundaries in his discussion of sublime rhetoric, he also challenges the facile association of style with a single figure. Associating sublime rhetoric with Demosthenes (see *Subl.* 2.3; 12.4–5; 14.1–2; 15.6, 9; 16.1, 3; 22.3; 24.1; 27.3; 32.1; 34.1–4; 36.2; 39.4) and Thucydides (see *Subl.* 14.1; 22.3; 25.1; 38.3) may not be surprising, but Longinus's mention of Sappho (*Subl.* 10.1) is striking. According to the analysis of Demetrius, Sappho is never mentioned in relationship to either the elevated or the forcible character of style. Demetrius discusses Sappho only in reference to the elegant style (see *Eloc*. 127, 132, 140, 146, 148, 162, 166).

[30] Although scholars long-assumed that the tripartite schema was the creation of Theophrastus, Hendrickson has shown convincingly that this assumption is wrong. See G.L. Hendrickson, "The Peripatetic Mean of Style and the Three Stylistic Characters," *AJP* (1904): 125–146; G.L. Hendrickson, "The Origin and Meaning of the Ancient Characters of Style," *AJP* (1905): 249–290; G.M.A. Grube, "Thrasymachus, Theophrastus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus," *AJP* (1952): 251–267.

[31] Though traditionally attributed to Cicero, most modern scholars regard the author of the *Rhet. Her.* as unknown (see the overview in Caplan, "Introduction," viii–xiv). The treatise reflects Hellenistic rhetorical training as Caplan notes: The treatise is "altogether Greek in doctrine," and it combines the teachings of several different theorists and philosophical schools (xv). Among other features of the treatise, the eclectic nature of the treatise leads scholars to date it to sometime in the first-century BCE (xxv). Caplan suggests that the treatise likely was written after Cicero's *De Inventione* (ca. 91 BCE), somewhere around 83 BCE (xxv).

the author describes how the other components of ornamentation relate to each style.

Once again, a cursory outline of each is in order. The grand style makes use of the "most ornate words," whether literal or figural; it selects impressive thoughts (*graves sententiae*); and, it employs figures of thought and speech that have grandeur (*Rhet. Her.* 4.11). The middle style is a more "relaxed style," but one that does not descend to "the most ordinary prose" (4.13). Pressed too far, the middle style results in discourse that fails to keep the hearer's attention and does not hold firmly to a single thought (4.16). Finally, the simple style is cast in the "most ordinary speech" (4.14). It consists of "elegant simplicity," which aims at correct and well-chosen words (4.16).

The brief description of each of the three styles above shows how the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* shift away from considering the intended effects or functions of each style toward a more precise description of their nature and component parts. The differences between the grand style of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and the elevated and forcible characters of style in Demetrius's schema should be apparent as well. The grand style, far from focusing on the effects of the unnatural or obscure use of language as in the elevated and forcible characters of style, consists of excellency in the use of language. It reflects a move to describe the grand style in quantitative terms—it is *more* refrined and *more* elegant—rather than as a qualitative difference between styles reflected in particular by the intended effects of each. While Demetrius views the characters as four distinct classes or qualities of style, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* suggests a continuum of style: style progresses from the completely commonplace to the overly ornate.

(iv) The Three Styles in Cicero

Cicero employs and expands upon the three-part classification in several places.[32] Cicero's plain style corresponds in large part with the plain style of the *Rhetorica ad*

[32] *Opt. Gen.* 2, 12; *De or.* 199; *Or. Brut*. 20–24, 69, 75–97.

Herennium: it should use language that is typical of a common person and should avoid rhythm, figurative language, and other embellishments; yet, it should have symmetry at times and occasionally add some "salt of pleasantry" like humor and wit (*Or. Brut.* 75–90). The middle style is more elaborate and embellished than the plain style but less so than the grand style; it has a minimal amount of vigor but abounds in charm; it uses figurative language that is tempered by practices of everyday speech (91–96). The grand or vigorous style leads to persuasion. It has the greatest power to "sway men's minds and move them in every possible way" (97). For Cicero as for the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, it is the orator's dexterity with the styles—not his use of the grand style alone—that enables him to overpower or move the hearer to action.[33]

Like the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero regards the three styles in a quantitative or progressive manner. The grand and the plain styles are on either end of the continuum of style. The grand style is "magnificent, opulent, stately, and ornate (*amplus, copiosus, gravis, ornatus*)" (*Or. Brut.* 97). In contrast, the plain style resembles the "restrained and plain" nature of every day speech (76). Cicero even implies that the plain and the middle styles must appear first before the grand style can be used (98–99). Without the precision of the plain style and pleasantries of the middle style, an orator who employs only the grand style speaks like an insane person, not a skilled orator (99).

(v) Dionysius of Halicarnassus: The Triumph of the Mixed Style

The critical writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus introduce important modifications to the tripartite schema. His analysis of style, moreover, intersects *De Sublimitate* in significant ways. Consequently, I will devote more attention to Dionysius's

[33] See *Or. Brut.* 55, 97, 125, 134. The ideal orator uses all three styles (plain, middle, and grand) to achieve the three offices of oratory (to teach, to delight, and to move) (see *Opt. Gen.* 3; *Or. Brut.* 19–20, 69). Propriety or appropriateness must be considered as well when determining the type of style used in oratory (see *Or. Brut.* 70–74). "He, then, will be an eloquent speaker—to repeat my former definition—who can discuss trivial matters in a plain style, matters of moderate significance in the tempered style, and weighty affairs in the grand manner" (*Or. Brut.* 101; see further *Or. Brut.* 123–124).

analysis of style than to the preceding theorists.

Dionysius's view of the three types of style appears most clearly in the treatise *Demosthenes* but is implicit to much of his critical writing. Toward the middle of *Demosthenes*, Dionysius recapitulates his analysis and his division of style "into three basic types, plain, grand and intermediate (τόν τε ἰσχνὸν καὶ τὸν ὑψηλὸν καὶ τὸν μεταξὺ τούτων)" (*Demos.* 33).

Dionysius describes the first type of style as "plain and simple (λιτὴ καὶ ἀφελής)" (*Demos.* 2).[34] The power of the plain style stems from its use of ordinary language. Lysias provides the model for the plain style.[35] The plain style of Lysias is not without its limits. It lacks intensity and power—it is not sublime (ὑψηλή) or imposing (μεγαλοπρεπής); it does not excite (καταπληκτική) or amaze (θαυμαστή); it lacks both intensity (τὸ δεινόν) and fear (τὸ φοβερόν). While it has the capacity to entertain, persuade, and charm (ἡδῦναι καὶ πεῖσαι καὶ χαριεντίσασθαι δύναται), it cannot force or compel the audience—it does not hold attention; it is devoid of sustained energy; it fails to portray emotions powerfully (*Lys.* 13).

Dionysius's discussion of the elevated style is no longer extant in *Demosthenes*, but his basic view of it can be reconstructed from his other treatises. In *Isocrates*, he compares the style of Lysias and Isocrates. The two resemble each other when it comes to word choice,[36] but they differ in the arrangement of words and the use of figures. Isocrates's style

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[34] Elsewhere in his treatises, Dionysius emphasizes the ideals of purity, clarity, and simplicity, even when describing another style or another figure from antiquity. See, e.g., *Isocr.* 2; *Is.* 3; *Thuc.* 5, 23, 28, 33, 36, 41, 49.

[35] Dionysius provides an expansive list of the qualities of Lysias's style: "...purity of language, correct dialect, the presentation of ideas by means of standard, not figurative expressions; clarity, brevity, concision, terseness, vivid representation, the investment of every person with life and character, the pleasing arrangement of words after the manner of ordinary speech, the choice of arguments to suit the persons and the circumstances of the case, the ability to win over and persuade, charm and a sense of timing which regulates everything else" (*Lys.* 13). Dionysius devotes a chapter to several of these virtues earlier in the treatise: clarity (*Lys.* 2), use of ordinary language (*Lys.* 3), lucidity (*Lys.* 4), brevity (*Lys.* 5), terseness (*Lys.* 6), vividness (*Lys.* 7), characterization (*Lys.* 8), and propriety (*Lys.* 9). In addition, he expands upon Lysias's ability to persuade (*Lys.* 10) and charm (*Lys.* 10–11)

[36] Both select words that are are clear, ordinary, vivid, lucid, and appropriate to the subject matter.

is more expansive, more ornate, and full of figures of speech.[37] On the whole, Isocrates style is more lofty (ὑψηλότερος), impressive (μεγαλοπρεπέστερος), and dignified (ἀξιωματικώτερος). According to Dionysius, the elevated quality (ὕψος) of Isocrates's style is "more suited to demigods (ἡρωϊκῆς) than to men" (*Isocr.* 3). Isocrates's more impressive style accords with his treatment of more impressive subjects (*Isocr.* 3). Like Lysias's plain style, the elevated style of Isocrates also has its limits. It is suitable for private reading alone, not for practical use in the assembly or law court; his periodic structure enervates the intensity of emotions; and, his predilection for antithesis, parallelism, and assonance obtrudes upon the hearer (*Isocr.* 2).

Dionysius's also finds examples of the elevated style in Isaeus.[38] Like Isocrates, Isaeus retains many of the Lysianic virtues related to word choice.[39] Also like Isocrates, Isaeus employs a more elaborate arrangement and peppers his oratory with figures of speech. The style of Isaeus lacks the charm of Lysias, but compensates for this lack through its "rhetorical power" (*Is.* 3). The very rhetorical power of Isaeus, however, also leads some to accuse Isaeus of "chicanery and deception" (*Is.* 4). Yet, it is this abnormality and elevation (ὕψος) that lends to his speeches their power and rhetorical force.

The final type of style in Dionysius's schema is the "mixed" style (ἡ μικτή). Although Dionysius ultimately champions Demosthenes as the supreme example, he also considers Isocrates and Plato as representatives of the mixed style. Isocrates combines the "Lysianic qualities of purity and clarity" with the "the dignity and beautiful language of Thucydides

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[37] His style does not "display a natural, simple and vigorous arrangement of words like that of Lysias (οὐδὲ τὴν σύνθεσιν ἐπιδείκνυται τὴν φυσικὴν καὶ ἀφελῆ καὶ ἐναγώνιον, ὥσπερ ἡ Λυσίου); rather it is designed to create an effect of ceremonious and ornate dignity, so that it may at times be more attractive, but at other times it seems labored" (*Isocr.* 3).

[38] His fame as an Attic orator notwithstanding, Isaeus interests Dionysius especially because he anticipates the style of Demosthenes, Dionysius's ideal orator. See, e.g., "Many passages can be found in Isaeus which, both in composition and in the use of figures (κατὰ τὴν σύνθεσιν καὶ κατὰ τοὺς σχηματισμοὺς), are quite different from the language of Lysias and resemble the brilliance of Demosthenes" (*Is.* 13).

[39] Like Lysias, Isaeus's style is pure precise, clear, standard, vivid, concise, persuasive, appropriate to the subject, and suitable for use in the law-courts (*Is.* 3).

and Gorgias."[40] Plato's style is also a "mixture of the grand and the plain style (καὶ αὐτὴ μῖγμα ἑκατέρων τῶν χαρακτήρων, τοῦ τε ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἰσχνοῦ)." Plato excels when he employs the plain and simple style of Lysias. His use of impressive and overdone words, obscure sentence arrangement, and improper figures, however, diminish his effectiveness (*Demos.* 5).[41]

Demosthenes is the ideal example of the mixed style because he attains the impressiveness and forcefulness of the elevated style without the artificiality of Isocrates and Plato.[42] Demosthenes balances the virtues of the plain and the elevated styles unlike any other writer (*Demos.* 3). His style is clear and precise without being frigid or clinical; it is artistic and forceful without being artificial. Demosthenes selects

> the best and most useful elements...weaving them together to make a single, perfect, composite style embracing the opposite qualities of grandeur and simplicity (μεγαλοπρεπῆ λιτήν), the elaborate and the plain (περιττὴν ἀπέριττον), the strange and the familiar (ἐξλλαγμένην συνήθη), the ceremonial and the practical (πανηγυρικὴν ἀληθινήν), the serious and the light-hearted (αὐστηρὰν ἱλαράν), the intense and the relaxed (σύντονον ἀνειμένην), the sweet and the bitter (ἡδεῖαν πικράν), the sober and the emotional (ἠθικὴν παθητικήν). (*Demos.* 8)

Dionysius clearly views the mixed style as superior to the other three. Demosthenes, as the ideal representative of the mixed style, gracefully combines the strengths of both the grand and the plain style while avoiding their weaknesses.

Before preceding, a word about Dionysius's use of ὕψος is in order. As is clear from the analysis above, ὕψος can be translated as "grand" (as in *Demos.* 5 quoted above) or

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[40] Features of the elevated style in Isocrates limit his effectiveness, though. His use of figures detracts from the overall quality of his style; his obsession with using beautiful-sounding words is apparent; and, his periodic structure is "tedious and unconvincing" (*Demos.* 4).

[41] *Demos.* 5. Dionysius adds: "I only wish to show that he is apt to commit errors of this kind in his more elaborate passages and that he falls below his own standards when he strives to express himself in a grand and extraordinary manner (ὅταν τὸ μέγα διώκῃ καὶ περιττὸν ἐν τῇ φράσει), but is far better when he uses language that is plain and precise and appears natural (τὴν ἰσχνὴν καὶ ἀκριβῆ καὶ δοκοῦσαν μὲν ἀποίητον εἶναι κατεσκευασμένην), but really contains a certain degree of simple and unexceptionable artifice" (*Demos.* 6).

[42] Dionysius compares the style of Demosthenes to that of Isocrates and Plato more fully in *Demos.* 16–32. According to Dionysius, Isocrates does not write concisely enough; he is overly afraid of harsh sounds; he fails to move the audience emotionally; and, his style lacks intensity of Demosthenes (τόνος) (see *Demos.* 16–20). Plato's style is most effective in his dialogues, which draw on the plain style. Plato's grasp of elevated ideas is admirable, but his zeal for "excessive ornamentation" (*Demos.* 25), his clumsy use of figures (*Demos.* 26–27), and his embellishment of trivial subjects (*Demos.* 28) makes his style frigid and contrived (*Demos.* 29).

"elevated" and can refer to the grand (or elevated) style. Even so, he uses the term not only to denote a particular style but also to compare different styles.[43] Frequently, ὕψος signifies the opposite of the plain, ordinary, and simple; it is nearly synonymous with elaborate or rhetorical. Dionysius and Longinus thus use the the term in different ways, especially in relation to the purported effects of style. The effects of ὕψος in Longinus—the audience's loss of agency, an intense emotional experience (especially of awe and terror), and an experience of *ekstasis*—are not limited to or even characteristic of the elevated style (ὕψος) in Dionysius.[44] Rather, it is Dionysius's mixed style that bears the greatest semblance to Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric. It is the mixed style of Demosthenes that, like the effects of sublime rhetoric, strikes and amazes, transports and inspires.

My survey highlights the dynamic nature of attempts to categorize types of style. Although the same basic distinction may be employed by multiple theorists—for example between the plain and grand style, these distinctions do not agree completely from one theorist to another. For example, Demetrius's elegant character of style corresponds most closely with Cicero's middle style, not the grand style as might be expected. Likewise, Cicero identifies the grand style as most conducive to persuasion, whereas Demetrius affords this function to the plain character of style. The ability of Cicero's grand style to "move" the hearers aligns most closely, not with the grand style of Dionysius, but with the mixed style.

It should be apparent, then, that trying to identity sublime rhetoric with one of the types or characters of style in ancient theory is difficult. Ancient theories of style do not

[43] Dionysius explains that the style of Isaeus is "more elevated (ὑψηλότερα) and less simple (ἧττον ἀφελέστερα)" than that of Lysias. Lysias's style resembles the speech of an ordinary person (ἰδιότης) while Isaeus's has been "been rhetorically composed (πεποιῆσθαι ῥητορικῶς)" (*Is.* 7). Lysias uses common figures (κατὰ τὴν κοινότητα τῶν σχημάτων) while Isaeus uses a greater variety of them (*Is.* 12). Similarly, the "elevation" of Isocrates stems from his transgression of ordinary (φυσικῶς) and simple (ἀσφελῶς) expression: "For this orator seeks beauty of expression by every means, and aims at polish (τοῦ γλαφυρῶς λέγειν στοχάζεται) rather than simplicity (τοῦ ἀφελῶς)" (*Isocr.* 2).

[44] For example, Dionysius considers both Isocrates and Isaeus as examples of the elevated style, but the style of neither of them produces the effects of sublime rhetoric. Thucydides alone produces effects similar to those of sublime rhetoric.

consistently identify the same number of styles nor, even when there is an area of correspondence, do they offer the same definitions or descriptions of these styles. For some theorists (e.g. the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero to some extent), the grand style signals a quantitative difference—writing that employs the grand style has *more ornamentation*: it uses more figural language, it employs more elegant vocabulary, and so forth. Ornamentation is something that can be added to more commonplace speech. For others (Demetrius in part and Dionysius in particular), there is more of a qualitative difference between the types of style. The types of styles are differentiated by their intended effects, not by the amount of ornamentation alone.

The reading of *De Sublimitate* in the previous chapter should make clear that sublime rhetoric, while certainly interested in the style of language, does not view style as a simple matter of the quantity of ornamentation. Rather, Longinus seems interested in a particular *quality* of discourse, most clearly manifested through its purported effects on the audience; it is the quality of discourse that sets it apart from other types.

Sublime Rhetoric and/as the Grand Style

I noted above how Aristophanes's *The Frogs* provides the initial outline of the contrast between the plain and the grand style. Aristophanes makes this distinction on the the basis of style (especially word choice), subject matter, and function or apparent effect. In contrast to the plain style, the grand style of Aeschylus uses rare or showy words; it aligns with the subject matter often related to superhuman ideas or realities; and, it has a non-rational (or supra-rational) effect on its hearers. While the plain style of Euripides may instruct the audience with everyday language, the shocking style of Aeschylus does more than teach; it *moves* the audience. Though certainly not as developed, the effects of Aeschylus's style—the moving, overwhelming, and mystifying effects—parallel those of sublime rhetoric in *De Sublimitate*. To compare the description of sublime rhetoric with

notions of the grand style, I focus in particular on the purported effects of the different types of style, especially in Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

The critical writings of Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus offer the closest correspondence with the description of the striking effects of Aeschylus and those of sublime rhetoric. Although the ideal orator should employ all three types of style, Cicero's description of the grand style emphasizes how it moves the audience. The grand style gives the orator the greatest power, enabling him to "sway men's minds and move them in every possible way." The grand style "implants new ideas and uproots the old" and "rushes along with the roar of a mighty stream" (*Or. Brut.* 97). Though the ideal orator must teach and delight as well, Cicero prioritizes the orator's moving the audience (*De or.* 1.30).

Yet, the movement of the audience in Cicero differs from the moving effects that Longinus attributes to sublime rhetoric. As I emphasized in the previous chapter, Longinus claims that sublime rhetoric moves the audience outside of themselves—it transports them to the scene being described, it uplifts them to divine ideals, and it fills them with the inspiration of another. In Cicero, movement refers to leading the audience to accept a particular perspective or course of action; it is moving the audience to assent to something (see *De or.* 1.213, 260; 2.70). Moving the audience in *De Sublimitate* seems to denote the expansion of the mind; it opens perspectives for the audience. In Cicero, moving the audience refers more to the closing of the mind; it is a narrowing of perspectives to accept the position of the orator. In *De Sublimitate*, sublime rhetoric moves the audience to conceive of new possibilities; in Cicero, movement refers to the audience's acceptance of the singular perspective of the speaker. In Cicero, moving the audience is synonymous with persuasion; in *De Sublimitate*, moving the audience is something that transcends persuasion (see *Subl.* 1.3–4).

Frequently, Cicero connects moving the audience with an appeal to the emotions

(*De or.* 1.53, 219; 2.32, 35, 185, 187, 189, 191, 337). Again, his view of the function of the emotions provides a point of comparison with *De Sublimitate*. Cicero presents an instrumental view of the emotions: they enable the speaker to move the audience to accept his point of view, especially as the audience comes to share in the emotions of the speaker. The emotions lead to persuasion. In *De Sublimitate*, the emotions are more of an end in themselves. Though there is mention of the audience sharing in the emotions of the speaker, Longinus is especially interested in the experience of particular emotions because they accompany or facilitate the effects of sublime rhetoric. Again, the difference relates to the place of persuasion in each theorist. In *De Sublimitate*, the emotions are not simply a tool that leads the audience to adopt a particular course of action. Instead, the emotions play a vital role in leading the audience outside of themselves.[45] As I will argue in chapter five, the moving and stirring effects of sublime rhetoric reorient the audience.

Among the theorists surveyed above, the writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus provide the greatest correspondence to *De Sublimitate* in terms of his description of the desired effects of each style. Though more concentrated in the description of the mixed style, there are similarities to the effects of sublime rhetoric in Dionysius's description of the elevated style of Thucydides. Thucydides retains the virtues of the plain style that Dionysius refers to as "essential" virtues. But, the style of Thucydides also contains elements similar to the grand style, which Dionysius names the "ancillary" virtues of style. The historians who wrote before Thucydides employed pure and concise words, avoided figurative language, and constructed simple sentences (*Thuc.* 23). These older historians,

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[45] Robert Doran explains that Longinus's contrast beteen persuasion and ecstasy is "both qualitative and quantitative. Persuasion is qualitatively different from ecstasy in the sense that it involves an emotional and rational manipulation in regard to a particular end, an extrinsic purposiveness, an instrumental relation to the social world ('something we can control'). Ecstasy, on the other hand, and concominant affects of amazement (or astonishent) and wonder (or awe or admiration), involve only an intrinsic purposiveness; these affects/effects are for Longinus an *end in themselves*... Persuasion is quantitatively different from ecstasy—hence Longinus's insistence on the *intensity of affect/effect* ('invisible power')" (*Theory of the Sublime*, 41).

however, lacked the ancillary virtues of style found in Thucydides:

> But the ancillary virtues, which reveal most clearly an orator's special ability, are neither all present nor fully developed individually, but are found sparsely and in diluted form—I am referring to sublimity, eloquence, dignity and grandeur (ὕψος λέγω καὶ καλλιρημοσύνην καὶ σεμνολογίαν καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν). Nor is there any intensity, any gravity, or any emotion to arouse the mind (τόνον οὐδὲ βάρος οὐδὲ πάθος διεγεῖρον τὸν νοῦν), nor any robust, combative spirit, all of which are essential to what we call genius (δεινότης). (*Thuc.* 23)

Dionysius champions Thucydides for his acquisition of the ancillary virtues of style (*Thuc.* 23–24). He chose words that were metaphorical, obscure, and archaic; he arranged the words in a dignified, severe, compact, and jarring manner; he utilized "ostentatious figures of speech" like parallelism, word play, and antithesis. His distinct style of writing history infused his writing with power and intensity; he had the ability to "disturb and terrify" (*Thuc.* 24). The ancillary virtues of style are seen most clearly through their effects (κατὰ τὰς ἀγωγάς): they stir the mind (καταπλήξασθαι δύναται τὴν διάνοιαν); induce tension and strain (συστρέψαι καὶ συντεῖναι τὸν νοῦν); and, lead to the expression of emotion (εἰς πάθος προαγαγεῖν) (*Demos.* 2).

The ancillary virtues of style, and especially their effects on the audience, are perfected in the style of Demosthenes, who models Dionysius's mixed style. His superlative combination of the plain and elevated styles imbues his oratory with power and intensity. Demosthenes's style leads to an experience of inspiration and transport; its appeal to the emotions masters the mind; it facilitates an experience likened to those of participants in religious festivals and rites (*Demos.* 22). The style of Isocrates, another example of the mixed style, has similar effects. His style allows him both to instruct his hearers (τὸ διδάξαι τὸν ἀκροατήν) with the simple style *and* to astound (τὸ καταπλήξασθαι) them with the elevated style (*Demos.* 4). Among the rhetorical and literary theorists discussed in this chapter, Dionysius's "mixed style" bears the greatest amount of similarity—especially in terms of purported effects—to Longinus's sublime rhetoric.

Stylizing Religious Experience

The survey of ancient analysis has drawn into sharper relief *De Sublimitate*'s emphasis on the powerful effects that Longinus attributes to sublime rhetoric. More than other ancient theories of style, Longinus stylizes religious experience. Longinus views sublime rhetoric as a substitute for the powerful and transformative nature of religious expeirence.

There are traces of this tendency to stylize religious experience in other theorists. For example, Demetrius uses religious experience as an analogy to the effects of the elevated character of style. He likens euphony in diction to the effects produced by the chants of Egyptian priests. The priests' chants exercise an even more enthralling effect than the flute and lyre, which was thought to facilitate religious experience.[46] Even here, the allusion to religious experience is underdeveloped at best, especially when compared to how Longinus describes the relationship between euphony and religious experience in *Subl.* 39.[47] The only other allusion to religious experience occurs in Demetrius's discussion of allegorical language (ἡ ἀλληγορία). The obscurity of allegorical language is "terror-striking" (*Eloc.* 100), which he likens to the Mysteries. Both allegorical language and the Mysteries inspire "such shuddering and awe as are associated with darkness and night" (*Eloc.* 101). Again, Demetrius suggests an analogy between style and religious experience, but the analogy is not developed.

Dionysius Halicarnassus's stylizing of religious experience is closer to that of

[46] *Eloc.* 71. Other writers from antiquity view the effects of musical instruments, to which the melody and rhythm of language is often likened, with suspicion. See, e.g., Plato, *Resp.* 398c–400a, esp. 399e–400a; Aristotle, *Pol.* 8.6.5 (1341a); Dio Chrysostom, 32.57–59. See further Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 97n95.

[47] According to Longinus, both the flute and euphonious language by analogy produce an ecstatic experience in the hearer. The flute "fills [the hearers] with divine frenzy" (*Subl.* 39.2); it "forces them to move to the rhythm" (*Subl.* 39.2); and, it exercises a "marvelous spell (*Subl.* 39.3). Likewise, euphony in composition "casts a spell on us and always turns our thoughts towards what is majestic and dignified and sublime and all else that it embraces, winning a complete mastery over our minds" (*Subl.* 39.3).

Longinus.[48] In *Lys.* 13, Dionysius comments on the limits of Lysias's style: his clear, plain style fails to create the ecstatic effects of other styles—is is not astonishing (καταπληκτικός) nor is it wonderful (θαυμαστός); it lacks intensity (τὸ δεινόν) and anything awe-inspiring (τὸ φοβερόν). Consequently it does not "have the power to grip the listener's attention, and to keep it rapt in suspense" (*Lys.* 13). The style of Isocrates, as an example of the mixed style, succeeds in those places where that of Lysias failed. Isocrates's style is loftier (ὑψηλότερος) than that of Lysias; his style is wonderful (θαυμαστός) and "more suited to the demigods (ἡρωϊκῆς) than to men" (*Isocr.* 3).

It is the mixed style of Demosthenes, however, that Dionysius most clearly connects style with religious experience. Dionysius's description of the purported effect of Demosthenes's style deserves to be quoted in full:

> [W]hen I pick up one of Demosthenes's speeches, I am transported (ἐνθουσιῶ): I am led hither and thither (δεῦρο κἀκεῖσε ἄγομαι), feeling one emotion after another—disbelief, anguish, terror, contempt, hatred, pity, goodwill, anger, envy—every emotion in turn that can sway (κρατεῖν) the human mind. I feel exactly the same as those who take part in the Corybantic dances and the rites of Cybele the Mother-Goddess (τῶν τὰ μητρῷα καὶ τὰ κορυβαντικά), and other similar ceremonies, whether it is because these celebrants are inspired by the scents, sights, or sound or by the influence of the deities themselves, that they experience many and various sensations. (*Demos.* 22)

Dionysius's description of Demosthenes's speeches emphasize their moving and stirring effects. They move him "hither and thither." His appeals to the emotion overpower the human mind. His experience of "many and various sensations" is likened to the religious experience of the Corybantic dancers and the devotees of Cybele.[49]

Language and/as Religious Experience

In a way that sets them apart from other literary and rhetorical theorists in antiquity, Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus describe the effects of style with language drawn from the religious world of antiquity. Both Longinus and Dionysius view

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[48] For an excellent overview of religious language in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus."

[49] Cf. Philo, *Opif.* 71. Philo describes the mind's grasp of the intelligible world through philosophy as a "sober intoxication" like those filled with "Corybantic frenzy."

the ecstatic, non-rational effects of literature in a positive light. Though comparative views from ancient rhetorical and literary sources are sparse, there are other voices from antiquity that share a similar view of the (pseudo-)religious capacity of language, whether favorably or with concern.

Gorgias of Leontini: Speech as Sacred Magic

Gorgias of Leontini's *Encomium of Helen*[50] explores the all-powerful nature of discourse (ὁ λόγος). Discourse is a "powerful lord" that exercises dominion over its hearers. It leads to both deception and persuasion, a distinction easily blurred in the *Encomium* (see *Hel.* 8). The domineering power of discourse leads to a "kind of evil persuasion" (14). Discourse attains its power by appealing to the hearer's opinions (δόξαι), not to their knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) (10). Persuasion (or deception) results from these appeals to the opinions of the hearers (13).[51] In addition to appealing to the opinions of the hearers, discourse also appeals to their emotions, compelling them to experience all kinds of unfounded or non-rational emotions. Gorgias reveals a deep awareness of the power of discourse to influence, even control, the hearer.

Gorgias develops important analogies to capture this dominating power of discourse. First, the overpowering effects of discourse have a "power of incantation" (ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἐπῳδῆς) that beguiles (θέλγω), persuades (πείθω), and changes the soul by witchcraft (μεθίστημι γοητείᾳ) (*Hel.* 10). Like a magician's spell, discourse changes the audience, especially their emotions.[52] Second, discourse has the same "ravishing" force as

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[50] Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen," in *The Greek Sophists* (ed. John M. Dillon and Tania Gergel; London; New York: Penguin, 2003) 76–84. References to the Greek follow Thomas Buchheim, ed., *Gorgias von Leontinoi: Reden, Fragmente, und Testimonien* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989).

[51] For example, astronomers make incredible things seem true through opinion. Orators can charm and persuade multitudes, but this comes through opinion not truth. Even the arguments of philosophers convince others by appealing to opinions.

[52] Speech has the power to "stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity" (*Hel.* 8). It allows the audience to experience the emotions felt by another speaker or character as well: "There come upon its hearers fearful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing, and at the good fortunes and evil actions of others' affairs and bodies through the agency of words the soul experiences suffering of its own...Inspired incantations conveyed through words become bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain" (*Hel.* 10).

pirates, which takes the hearer captive, constraining the soul "to obey its utterances and to approve its doings" (*12*). Third, discourse is like a drug. Just as drugs produce a number of different effects on the body when ingested, so discourse generates changes in the hearers and their emotions; it causes fear and emboldens the hearers. As one commentator notes, Gorgias marvels at the power of speech because the speaker could "inspire whatever feelings he wished, with an easy and powerful magic."[53] Discourse, because of its appeals to the opinions and emotions of the hearers, wields significant, but dangerous power over the hearer. Whether through an analogy to magic, physical force, or medicine, Gorgias emphasizes how speech reduces the agency of the audience, how it dominates them, and how it compels them to act in a certain way.[54]

Plato and the Danger of Inspired Poetry

The dialogues of Socrates also provide insight into the capacity of language and some of its non-rational aspects, especially the role of inspiration in the creation of poetry. Two dialogues in particular—the *Ion* and the *Phaedrus*—discuss the nature and value of poetic inspiration. In the course of these dialogues, important corollaries to the view of sublime rhetoric come into view. The dialogues and the treatise are similar in the emphasis on the inspired and ecstatic state of the poet (or other great authors, in the case of *De Sublimitate*). Socrates's view of poetic inspiration sheds some light on Longinus's view of imitation and imagination. The perspective of Longinus differs from that of the dialogues in important ways, however. The comparison brings into sharper relief Longinus's commendation of the intended effects of sublime rhetoric. In addition, it highlights the

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[53] Jacqueline de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 22. De Romilly earlier connects this magical power of rhetoric with ancient views on poetry: "it is obvious that the very aim of rhetoric was fixed at the start by Gorgias's reference to the irrational influence of poetry" (de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric*, 7).

[54] See Elizabeth Asmis, “Plato on Poetic Creativity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (ed. Richard Kraut; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 338–364: "The listener is momentarily put in the power of another, as demonstrated most vividly by the effect of poetry and magical spells. The speaker controls the listener not by any insights that he has, but by the language that bears his message" (341).

particular function of sublime rhetoric in "shifting the gaze" of the audience.

The dialogue *Ion*[55] depicts a conversation between Socrates and Ion, a rhapsode of Homer, discussing the the role of divine inspiration in the creation and interpretation of poetry.[56] According to Socrates, the poet cannot fulfill his task as poet without being inspired and possessed (ἔνθεοι ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι) (533e); rhapsodes, likewise, must interpret the poets through divine power (θεῖος δύναμις) (532d). The dialogue expands upon the nature of poetic inspiration.

First, inspiration is transferable. Just as a magnetism moves through metal, inspiration moves through human beings: the Muse inspires the poet; the poet transfers his inspiration to the rhapsode; and, the rhapsode finally inspires the audience (see 536a). Socrates's view of the "magnetism" of inspiration resembles Longinus's view of imitation (*Subl.* 13–14). Like poetic inspiration, sublime rhetoric is contagious; contact with great writers of old allow subsequent generations to share in their inspiration.[57]

Second, Socrates draws on language and concepts from ancient religion to explain other aspects of poetic inspiration. Like Corybantic worshippers who lose their senses through rhythmic dancing, the melody and rhythm of poetic verse leads the poets to become “frantic” and come under possession (βακχεύουσι καὶ κατεχόμενοι) (*Ion* 534a). Similarly, a poem is akin to uttering a prophetic oracle (534b) or to the prophetic activity of soothsayers and seers (534c–d), since a poet cannot create poetry until he has been "put out

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[55] Greek text and translation are from Plato, *Ion* (trans. W.R.M. Lamb; LCL 164; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1925).

[56] Socrates does not deny the inspiration of the poets nor is he the first to understand poetry as the result of divine inspiration. Already in the fifth-century BCE, Democritus stated without argument that the poet writes with enthusiasm and inspiration (see Democritus, fr. 17, 18, 21). An accessible English translation of Democritus's fragments can be found in Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966 [1948]). While Socrates seems to accept this common view, he does so ironically. He insists that poetry has no epistemic value. It does not emerge from genuine knowledge nor does it produce genuine knowledge, but relates only to human opinion.

[57] Despite the similarity, the *Ion* and *De Sublimitate* have distinct areas of emphasis. Plato's dialogue is most concerned with the inspiration of the poet and the rhapsode, offering little about the audience's experience of inspiration. In contrast, Longinus takes the inspiration of the authors for granted and focuses far more attention on the effects of sublime rhetoric on the audience.

of his senses."

Third, the performance and interpretation of poetry by the rhapsode requires a similar experience of inspiration. Ion affirms that the recitation of Homer results from being "carried out" of himself and from his "ecstasy of the soul." The “ecstasy of the soul” transports the rhapsode to the scene being described (535b). It is striking that Socrates connects this experience of ecstasy brought about by inspiration to the imagination. In this way, the *Ion* again resembles the perspective of *De Sublimitate* (see *Subl.* 15). Both emphasize the effects of the imagination, which witness and communicate images to the audience that are not physically present. The comparison, however, serves to accentuate Longinus's focus on the intended effects of sublime rhetoric on the hearer; as with the magnetic force of inspiration, the *Ion* focuses on the poet's experience of the imagination more so than on the effects of the imagination on the audience.

The *Phaedrus* provides additional insight into Socrates's view of poetic inspiration.[58] Much of the conversation concerns four types of madness (μάνια): prophetic madness, ritual madness, poetic madness, and the madness caused by love.[59] In its various forms, madness (like inspiration in the *Ion*) refers to an experience of being out of one's "right" mind. Prophets, we learn, can do nothing of value when they are in their right minds (244a). Similarly, ritual madness bypasses the "right mind" of the participant through prayer, worship, and impromptu prophecy, actions which offer the worshipper relief from trouble (244e). Poetry too requires "divine madness" because it is impossible for a "sane man" to write poetry; rather, true poetry is the product of the "inspired madman" (245a). Socrates's words about the first three forms of madness are really only precursors to his discussion of the fourth form of madness, love, which sheds more light on his view of

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[58] Greek text and translation are from Plato, *Phaedrus* (trans. Harold North Fowler; LCL 36; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1914).

[59] See also Socrates's restatement of the four forms of divine madness in *Phaedr.* 265b. For an overview citing other relevant sources, see Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational*, 64–100.

poetic inspiration.

Love is a madness given by the gods; the madness of love originates in inspiration (249e). Like the other forms of madness, the madness of love manifests itself through its desired effects, namely that it makes one a philosopher. Love's madness helps the soul grow wings and shifts its gaze upward (249d–e); it helps the soul recollect realities above earth (250a). As with the other forms of madness, this recollection leads to the loss of one's "right" mind. Though few people actually experience this recollection, those who do are "stricken with amazement and can no longer control themselves" (250a). Whereas Longinus connects amazement with sublime rhetoric, Socrates views it as an important consequence of philosophy. In order to recollect the ideals of the other world, however, one must forget those of earth. This forgetting-to-remember makes one an initiate into the "perfect mysteries," but alienates him from others who "consider him mad and do not know that he is inspired" (249d).

It is only once Socrates has described the madness of love—in essence, a description of the philosophical life—that his ironic or even negative view of poetic madness (and poetic inspiration) comes into view. In the first place, he concludes the description of love's madness by asserting that neither "human wisdom nor divine inspiration can confer upon man any greater blessing" than results from the madness of love (256c). More explicitly, Socrates reveals his low view of poetic inspiration in *Phaedr.* 248d–e, where he lists the poet lowest among the divinely inspired persons.[60] In the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*, Socrates recognizes the creation of poetry through divine inspiration.[61] But, he significantly reduces its value, particularly for those who aspire to the philosophical life.

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[60] In this section, Socrates lists the types of human souls from greatest to least. The philosopher—the one who exhibits the madness of love—sits at the top of Socrates's list. The tyrant is at the bottom. Souls associated with the other forms of madness—prophetic, ritual, and poetic—are in the middle of his list. For the significance of this order, see Asmis, "Poetic Creativity," 359.

[61] Elsewhere in his corpus, Plato reveals a far more critical view of poetry and the poets (see, e.g., *Resp.* 2, 3, 10). For a general discussion, see Asmis, "Poetic Creativity;" Stephen Halliwell, *Between Ecstasy and Truth: Interpretations of Greek Poetics from Homer to Longinus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155–207.

It is all the more important, than, to recall Longinus's conversation with the philosopher in *Subl.* 44. In that chapter and elsewhere in the treatise, Longinus's alludes to shifting the eyes upward. Both Longinus and Socrates associate this shift to being out of one's mind and insist that it results from amazement or wonder. It is essential to note that Longinus attributes this shift to the purported effects of sublime rhetoric, not to philosophy. Rather, as I will explore more fully in chapter five, Longinus presents the effects of sublime rhetoric as a substitute for Socrates's philosophical life. Longinus presents sublime rhetoric as a stand-in not only for religious experience (as noted above) but also for philosophy.

Aristotle: Poetic Emotion and Catharsis

The writings of Aristotle also demonstrate a concern for the non-rational capacity of language, both in rhetoric and in poetry.[62] He takes for granted the inspired nature of poetry, but in a way that differs from the notion found in Plato's writings discussed above. The inspired character of poetry in Aristotle relates more to the representation of emotion in poetry and how that representation affects the audience than to its divine origin. Whereas Plato views the powerful and non-rational effects of poetic emotion as a danger to his ideals of a rational, clear-thinking republic,[63] Aristotle views these effects as vital for both political and ethical purposes.

The central place of emotion in poetry appears clearly in Aristotle's definition of tragedy in *Poet.* 6.2:

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[62] While Aristotle views the powerful effects of emotion as characteristic of poetry, he also retain a small place for emotion or the "emotional orator" in rhetoric as well. Aristotle explains that diverging from ordinary word choice is fitting for an "emotional speaker" (λέγοντι παθητικῶς) (*Rhet.* 3.7.11); the expression of rage, for example, excuses potential violations of the standards for clarity. The use of abnormal words by "enthusiastic orators" (ἐνθουσιάζοντες) fills the audience with enthusiasm (ποιήσῃ ἐνθουσιάσαι) and induces feelings of praise, blame, anger, or friendliness. Though Isocrates serves as an example of enthusiastic oratory, Aristotle insists that the enthusiastic style is especially appropriate for poetry, since poetry is inspired (ἔνθεον γὰρ ἡ ποιήσις) (*Rhet.* 3.7.11).

[63] See Plato, *Resp.* 10. See the discussion in Halliwell, *Ecstasy and Truth*, 155–207. Halliwell notes the "irreducibly complex dialectic" of Plato's attitudes toward poetry, namely "between attraction and resistance to the possibilities of poetic experience" (159).

> Tragedy, then, is mimesis of an action which is elevated, complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished by distinct forms in its sections; employing the mode of enactment, not narrative; and through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis of such emotion (τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν).[64]

Tragedy, and poetry more generally, relates to humanity's natural inclination toward representation (μίμησις) and the general enjoyment it produces (see *Poet.* 4.2–6). Tragedy in particular concerns the representation of an action that is enacted, not simply narrated.

Central to this enacted action, moreover, is the depiction of emotion (pity and fear) and the audience's experience of emotion through what Aristotle calls catharsis. This catharsis or release of emotion through poetry leads to a particular experience of pleasure that originates from the representation of pity and fear. The experience of pleasure is a necessary component of tragic poetry.[65] Aristotle's description of catharsis and the experience of pleasure that results from it are underdeveloped. It is clear, though, that both are related to the capacity of poetry to "lead out the soul" (ψυχαγωγεῖν) of the audience. Poetry moves the audience to experience the tragic suffering of characters in the poem, while simultaneously drawing out the emotions of fear and pity from them.

More insight into the nature of catharsis through poetry comes in Aristotle’s *Politics,*[66] in which he attributes a similar cathartic effect to music. Like poetry, music has a powerful, even non-rational capacity. Music, Aristotle says, is not simply a matter of relaxation or amusement, but has the ability to shape the soul of the listener (*Pol.* 8.5.2). The so-called ethical melodies are particularly effective for the soul's education (παιδεία),

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[64] Greek text and English translation are from Aristotle, *Poetics* (trans. Stephen Halliwell; LCL 199; rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1999 [1995]). I have followed the section divisions provided by Fyfe's earlier translation of *Poetics*.

[65] *Poet.* 14.5: "And since the poet should create the pleasure which comes from pity and fear through mimesis, obviously this should be built into the events." Aristotle insists that the strongest means of producing this emotional effect (ψυχαγωγεῖν) are elements of the plot, namely instances of "reversal" (αἱ περιπέτειαι) and "recognition" (αἱ ἀναγνωρίσεις) (*Poet.* 6.17). Halliwell explains the complexity of this pleasure: "[I]t converts emotions whose intentional object is something negative (i.e. human sufferings) into the basis for pleasure, and ties that conversion to the workings of mimesis" (Halliwell, *Ecstasy and Truth*, 222–23).

[66] Greek text and English translation from Aristotle, *Politics* (trans. H. Rackham; LCL 264; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1944 [1932]).

but music also shapes the soul through its appeal to the emotion. Both the melodies of Olympus and the expression of strong emotion in music make the hearer's soul "enthusiastic" (ἐνθουσιαστικάς) (*Pol.* 8.5.5). Certain melodies, moreover, lead to the experience of κάθαρσις (8.7.4). As with poetry, Aristotle links the experience of musical catharsis with the emotions of pity and fear (8.7.5). Music, however, also leads to an experience of enthusiasm (see 8.5.5 mentioned above) that throws the audience "into a state as if they had received medicinal treatment and taken a purge (ὥσπερ ἰατρείας τυχόντας καὶ καθάρσεως)" (8.7.5). As with poetry, this catharsis or "purge" leads to a "pleasant feeling of relief" (8.7.6).[67]

Aristotle insists that both poetry and music, when rightly experienced, have a positive effect on the listener. Poetry and music play a therapeutic role in Aristotle's larger moral and ethical program. In the first place, poetic catharsis can be pedagogical. The suffering of characters in a poem reveals—albeit it in an affective and performative way—important ethical values and characteristics of moral virtues. Poetry is valuable not for entertainment or escape alone, but also for moral formation, since it trains the audience to *feel* rightly and *love* correctly. Beyond this, poetry like music provides a necessary outlet for emotion. Aristotle, unlike Plato, refuses to banish the strong emotions brought on by poetry. Rather, both poetry and music allow the audience to effectively experience (i.e. "purge") these emotions.

Aristotle's view of poetry provides an important point of comparison concerning the role and effects of emotion in discourse. Like Gorgias, Aristotle acknowledges the emotional and even non-rational power of discourse, in this case poetry. Aristotle accepts poetry's inspired character as well. On the whole, Aristotle offers a largely positive view of the role and effects of poetic emotion. Yet, for Aristotle, poetic emotion is valued insofar as

[67] Aristotle limits the value of catharsis in music slightly more than he does with poetry, as seen by his cautious words about the effects of the flute and other forms of music (see *Pol.* 8.6.5–8.8.9).

it provides release for emotion that, if left to itself, might come to expression in inappropriate ways. In many ways, we might say that Longinus intensifies and expands upon Aristotle's understanding of poetic emotion. While Aristotle does attribute to poetic emotion something like an ecstatic effect, the idea is not central to Aristotle's thinking in the way that it is for Longinus. Nor does Longinus value emotion in discourse because it releases potentially suppressed emotions. Emotion is vital for both poetry and sublime rhetoric, but toward different ends. Catharsis brings the audience back to emotional equilibrium. The effect of emotion in sublime rhetoric is just the opposite; it leads not to equilibrium, but to disequilibrium as emotion acts as a major source in the decentering, stirring effect of sublime rhetoric.

Plutarch: Purging Poetry for Philosophy

If Aristotle sees poetry as a necessary outlet for the non-rational power of emotion, another of Plato's students Plutarch—writing several centuries later—views poetry and emotion more cautiously. In his treatise, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry*,[68] Plutarch indirectly affirms the affective, irrational, and even religious power of poetry discussed above. Poetry disturbs (*Adol. poet. aud.* 15c); it is unruly (15f); it is full of emotion (17d); it is astonishing (20f), alluring (25c), and wonderful (25e); it casts a spell on its readers (26b). Yet, Plutarch views all of these effects negatively. The disturbing nature of poetry enables it to mislead the reader (15c) and leads easily to deception (15d; 16a–b). Plutarch admits that poetry can carry one "off his feet," but warns that it does so only to pervert right thinking (16d). The emotional quality of poetry leads to illogical thinking (17d).

To "trim back" these unruly aspects of poetry, Plutarch advises that poetry be read as an "introductory exercise" to philosophy (15f). When read correctly, poetry reinforces the moral and ethical values of philosophy:

[68] Greek text and English translation from Plutarch, *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* (trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; LCL 197; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927).

> [L]et him cherish the belief that poetry is an imitation of character and lives, and of men who are not perfect or spotless or unassailable in all respects, but pervaded by emotions, false opinions, and sundry forms of ignorance, who yet through inborn goodness frequently change their ways for the better. For if the young man is so trained, and his understanding so framed, that he feels elation and a sympathetic enthusiasm over noble words and deeds, and an aversion and repugnance for the mean, such training will render his perusal of poetry harmless...One ought not timorously, or as though under the spell of a holy place, to shiver with awe at everything, and fall prostrate, but should rather acquire the habit of exclaiming with confidence"wrong" and "improper" no less than "right" and "proper." (*Adol. poet. aud.* 26a–b)

Poetry vividly demonstrates human vice to be avoided while illustrating the pursuit of virtue and the moral life. To read poetry philosophically, one must pay strict attention to those things that "lead toward virtue and have the power to mould character" (28e). Those aspects of poetry that do not point to virtue, or potentially undermine it, must be ignored or reinterpreted.

More so than Plato or Aristotle, Plutarch focuses on *how* to read poetry in a way that mitigates its dangerous potential. To cull the positive and beneficial from the potentially dangerous, the amateur reader of poetry should remember that, "Many are the lies the poets tell" (16d). It is the fictionalization of poetry, more than diction and meter, that lends to poetry its allure and charm but also its unruly power (16b–c). The young reader of poetry protects himself against the "sorcery of the poetic art" by reading poetry through the truth provided by philosophy (16d). In addition, Plutarch attempts to limit the affective power of poetry. Emotion, especially in poetry, endangers the reader. Poetic emotion is an "infecting" weakness that overwhelms and disturbs the hearers (17d). Finally, Plutarch advises the novice reader to always keep in mind that poets, like painters, specialize only in imitative art (17f). This recognition allows the reader to commend the poet's artistic ability without approving of the dispositions or actions of characters in a poem. Again, Plutarch recommends a cautious and selective reading of poetry that extracts what is philosophically or morally useful.

Plutarch represents the antithesis in many ways to Longinus's view of the effects of

sublime rhetoric. Both authors share a basic assumption: texts exercise power over readers and hearers. Both assume that texts can affect the emotions of the hearers; both take for granted the fact that texts shape how one views the world. For Plutarch, this powerful dynamic of poetry must be controlled, harnessed, and eliminated, if possible, by reading philosophically. For Longinus, in contrast, this capacity of language is the essence of sublime rhetoric. It is not meant to be culled or limited but to be nurtured in the reading of eminent authors from old and in the creation of new works. Plutarch and Longinus represent two very different views of the reader's (or hearer's) relationship to texts. For Plutarch, poetry is most profitable when the reader exercises control over it and draws moral lessons from it. In contrast, Longinus views the reader as being swept away by a text's diction, imagery, and emotion, abandoning her control over the text.

Plutarch and Longinus differ on the ultimate value of reading or studying poetry. For Plutarch, the supreme value of poetry is its pedagogical function. Poetry is important and useful when it effectively teaches morals to young readers. By depicting characters who are morally virtuous and vicious, poetry provides models of imitation for the reader. In contrast, Longinus views a focus on character formation to be an indication of literature's loss of vitality, not its primary strength (*Subl.* 9). More significantly, Longinus views the ecstatic effects of sublime rhetoric—the very features that Plutarch hopes to remove—as central to the moral value of certain texts. The experience of emotions and the temporary loss of self do not inhibit moral formation or moral progress; rather, as Longinus makes clear in *Subl.* 35–36 and in his final chapter, these very aspects of sublime rhetoric enable the reader to lead a properly philosophical life.

Philo of Alexandria: Reading and/as Religious Experience

Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish exegete and philosopher,[69] reads Israel's sacred texts

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[69] For an overview of Philo's corpus of writing, see Peder Borgen, *Philo, John, and Paul: New Perspectives on*

with a focus on their philosophical value somewhat like Plutarch. Philo's reading strategy attempts to make Judaism and the Jewish law viable philosophically. Like Plutarch, he reads scripture intentionally, focusing on how it informs, shapes, and enables its readers to live the ideal life. Unlike Plutarch, however, Philo does not attempt to limit the non-rational effects of reading entirely. Rather, Philo examines how reading scripture can facilitate religious experience. This approach to reading appears clearly in two passages: the first is an autobiographical reflection on Philo's pursuit of the contemplative life (*Spec.* 3.1–6); the second is found in his description of the Therapeutae (*On the Contemplative Life*).

At the beginning of book three of *On the Special Laws*,[70] Philo pauses briefly to reflect on a time when he had "leisure for philosophy and for the contemplation of the universe and its contents" (*Spec.* 3.1). He describes this period with language drawn from the myth of the soul's ascent in the *Phaedrus*. Philo's contemplation provided freedom from base thoughts and earthly concerns (3.2); he was constantly "born aloft into the heights with a soul possessed by some God-sent inspiration (κατὰ τινα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιθειασμόν), " which made him "a fellow-traveller with the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe" (3.1). His time of contemplation was only temporary; however; he laments how he was eventually pulled down by an "ocean of civil cares" that made it difficult for him to lift his eyes heavenward (3.3).[71]

Judaism and Early Christianity (BJS 131; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), 17–59; Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 29–81; James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 32–64. Nearly all of Philo's extensive corpus of writing relates to one degree or another with reading and interpreting Jewish scripture. Besides his apologetic treatises and more speculative writings, Philo demonstrates a constant concern for interpreting and applying Israel's scripture to his own very different context in Egypt. For a discussion of Philo's philosophical background, see the now classic treatment in John M Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996 [1977]), 139–83.; see also, Peder Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for his Time* (NovTSup 86; Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997), 1–13.

[70] Greek text and English translation from Philo, *On the Special Laws* (trans. F. H. Colson; LCL 320; Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1937).

[71] For Philo's role as statesman and ambassador on behalf of the Jewish people in Alexandria, see his treatises *Leg.* and *Flacc.* See also Daniel R. Schwartz, "Philo, His Family, and His Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 9–31; E. Mary Smallwood, "The Jews in Egypt and Alexandria," in *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*

Reading and interpreting scripture offers Philo relief from the downward pull of civil affairs. Scripture study enables him to lift the eyes of his soul:

> Yet it is well for me to give thanks to God even for this, that though submerged I am not sucked down into the depths, but can also open the soul's eyes...and am irradiated by the light of wisdom, and am not given over to lifelong darkness. So behold me daring, not only to read the sacred messages of Moses, but also in my love of knowledge to peer into (διακύπτειν) each of them and unfold and reveal (διαπτύττειν καὶ ἀναφαίνειν) what is not known to the multitude. (*Spec.* 3.6)

Philo sees scripture study not simply as a matter of gaining greater philological or historical understanding, but as a means of contemplating wisdom hidden in the text.[72] As Philo opens up and unfolds the words of scripture, the eyes of his soul are again opened and his soul attains wings to inhale "a breath of life pure and unmixed with evil" (3.4). In this short autobiographical aside, Philo identifies scripture reading as an essential component in the contemplative life; if only momentarily, "text work" provides an escape from earthly concerns and insight into God's mysterious and life-sustaining wisdom.[73]

In *On the Contemplative Life*,[74] Philo connects the reading practices of the Therapeutae with the contemplative life even more completely. Their commitment to contemplation leads them to abandon their property and their families (*Contempl.* 3–18) and to seek a philosophical life away from the cities (19–20). Like Philo's autobiographical aside in *Spec.* 3, Philo's description of the Therapeutae joins language drawn from the *Phaedrus* and that of the mystery religions. The Therapeutae, he says, desire to have a vision of the "Existent

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(Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976) 220–255.

[72] Celia Deutsch calls attention to how Philo here combines language drawn from the mystery religions as well as Plato's *Phaedrus*: "At this point Philo uses another metaphor drawn from the mysteries. He stoops to peer into the messages of Moses—words that suggest peering through a low door into a sanctuary chamber... In the convergence of imagery there is a paradox: stooping to peer as into a chamber—the ritual chamber of the "sacred messages of Moses"—becomes a correlative of flight." See Celia Deutsch, "Visions, Mysteries, and the Interpretative Task: Text Work and Religious Experience in Philo and Clement," in *Experientia, Volume 1: Inquiry Into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Frances Flannery *et al.*; Symposium Series 40; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 92–93.

[73] I borrow the phrase "text work" from Celia Deutsch, who has written extensively on the relationship between reading scripture and religious experience in Philo and Clement of Alexandria. See Celia Deutsch, "The Therapeutae, Text Work, Ritual, and Mystical Experience," in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. April D. Deconick; SBL Symposium 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 1–24; Deutsch, "Visions, Mysteries."

[74] Greek text and English translation from Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* (trans. F. H. Colson; LCL 363; rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1954).

One" and thus "soar above the sun of our senses" (11). They are "carried away by a heaven-sent passion of love, remain rapt and possessed like bacchanals or corybants (οἱ βακχευόμενοι καὶ κορυβαντιῶντες, ἐνθουσιάζουσι) until they see the object of their yearning" (12). Central to their contemplative life is the reading of scripture with fosters "perfect knowledge" (27). Bracketed by morning and evening prayer, the individuals of the community spend their day in spiritual exercise (ἄσκησις) centered on drawing out the "underlying" meaning scripture, which ends in the composition of "hymns and psalms to God" (28–29).

While gathered together, reading and interpreting scripture continues to provide a mode of religious experience. After the members sit in the general assembly, the senior member offers a well-reasoned discourse on scripture (31). The senior member discusses questions raised by the text of scripture or by someone else (75). He teaches in a deliberate and repetitive manner, ensuring that the thoughts of scripture are permanently imprinted (ἐγχαράσσω) on the souls of his hearers (76). His exposition of scripture (αἱ ἐξηγήσεις τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων) in their communal gatherings concerns the "inner meaning conveyed in allegory" (78). Reading scripture through the allegorical method allows the reader to see again his "rational soul" reflected in the writings and to contemplate the marvelous beauty of concepts (νοήματα) found therein (78). The allegorical examination leads to the singing of hymns composed either by the senior member or by an earlier poet (80). Following the Therapeutae's solemn meal (81–82), the singing of hymns recommences and endures until daybreak (83–87).

In this section of the treatise, Philo emphasizes the ecstatic effects of the meter and melody of the community's hymns. The hymns leave the community "rapt with enthusiasm" having "drunk as in the Bacchic rites of the strong wine of God's love" (*Contemp.* 85). Implicit to Philo's description of the Therapeutae's harmonies and

antiphonies is the conviction that language, like music, has the capacity to overpower the participants. Though Philo's words resemble those of Longinus in his discussion of rhythm and melody (*Subl.* 39), Philo places this effect within the nexus of scripture study, sharing a sacred meal, and the composition and performance of religious hymns.

The two examples from Philo are similar to the other examples discussed in this section. Philo stresses the potential and power of reading, interpreting, and studying scripture. It connects the reader with transcendent realities—the "Existent One" and heavenly ideals and principles. Unlike the previous authors surveyed, however, the power of scripture is not wholly unmediated. The effects of literature do not come as suddenly in Philo's account as they do for Longinus or Gorgias. Rather, contemplation and the experience of inspiration are connected more completely to the effort or ability of the reader. In this regard, Philo resembles Plutarch in his view of the reader's relationship to scripture. Scripture is not something that masters the reader; rather, the reader masters scripture—he uncovers its hidden meanings, reveals its true intentions. It is this effort in unfolding and revealing scripture's inner or mystical meaning that proves formational. In this way, the ecstatic, non-rational effects of sublime rhetoric are not as strongly present in Philo's notion of scripture study. Rather, these effects arise through the community's performance of religious hymns.

Conclusion

Although *De Sublimitate* overlaps significantly with ancient literary and rhetorical criticism, Longinus's emphasis on the desired effects of sublime rhetoric is distinctive in several ways. First, his treatise has a nearly exclusive focus on identifying, analyzing, and imitating discourse that "moves beyond persuasion." Throughout the treatise, Longinus explores the ways in which sublime rhetoric masters, inspires, and moves the audience. In terms of quantity and focus, *De Sublimitate* does not have a rival. Second, Longinus's treatise

is more comprehensive in its discussion of the ecstatic effects of sublime rhetoric. Longinus does not confine these effects to any one aspect of discourse—the subject matter, appeals to the emotion, word choice, or sentence arrangement, for example. Rather, Longinus insists that each element can facilitate the effects of sublime rhetoric. Finally, *De Sublimitate* imagines a different function of sublime rhetoric than the one found in rhetorical treatises. Sublime rhetoric does not result in closure and consensus, as it does in typical notions of oratory, but in powerful experiences that lead to moral formation and new perception. Though present throughout the treatise, the final chapter illustrates how sublime rhetoric facilitates such changes. Sublime rhetoric rouses the hearer from the slumber of moral apathy; it shifts one's gaze from fleeting concerns to those that endure.

Among other writers who reflect on the affective, non-rational capacity of various forms of discourse, *De Sublimitate* maintains several unique perspectives and emphases. Most obviously, Longinus's resolute regard for the positive moral function of sublime rhetoric is striking. In contrast to Gorgias, Plato, and especially Plutarch, Longinus views sublime rhetoric as an important catalyst for moral formation, not something that obstructs it. Moreover, the non-rational, ecstatic capacity of language is not something that must be controlled or eliminated for the sake of moral formation, but rather act as a central medium for (re)shaping the moral self. Longinus is also more comprehensive in this regard. The powerful aspects of sublime rhetoric are not restricted to the realm of the emotions, as they are for Aristotle. Nor are they the result of diligent text work and specific reading practices as they are for Philo. Sublime rhetoric highlights what discourse *does* to its hearers in a way that does not depend entirely on either the preparation and mindset of the reader *or* the intention of the author.

Chapter Four:
Hearing and Responding to God's Speech at the Mountain

The preceding two chapters—the close reading of Longinus's *De Sublimitate* and the comparison of the treatise with other voices from antiquity—guide the following stages of my study. The next chapters are more exegetical in nature, but they are informed by the perspective of *De Sublimitate* as well. By using *De Sublimitate* as an analytical tool in the interpretation of Hebrews, I do not assume that author of Hebrews had read it or was in any way familiar with its ideas. Rather, I use the treatise to highlight how one ancient theorist conceptualized the *capacity* and *intended effects* of texts in order to evaluate the form of Heb 12:18–29, its potential effects, and its literary function. My analysis will focus not simply on *what* the author of Hebrews says but also on *how* the author says it. Informed by *De Sublimitate*, I consider the *elements of style* found in Heb 12:18–29 in this chapter; in the following chapter, I explore more fully how Longinus's treatise might help account for the possible *effects* of the passage's particular form.

An analysis of stylistic features of Heb 12:18–29 accentuates several features of the passage that resonate with Longinus's view of sublime rhetoric, many of which previous interpretations have overlooked or undervalued. Traditional interpretations have focused a great deal of attention on different ideas in the text and how they help unlock the passage's meaning and function. The style of the passage does not factor significantly in these interpretations. The perspective of *De Sublimitate* suggests instead that word choice, sentence structure, and the use of figures are not secondary but play a crucial role in the hearers' experience of the passage and its function. Strange and poetical vocabulary has a striking effect on the hearers. The passage creates its own form of harmony or rhythm through assonance, which moves the hearers through the image-filled passage. The avoidance of connective particles makes the comparison of the two locations of God's

speech more immediate (12:18–24). The abrupt turn to the imperative in 12:25 adds to the emotional intensity of the passage. Hebrews 12:18–29 appeals to the imagination, capitalizing on the use of vivid description and imagery. The figure of periphrasis, which also makes use of vivid description, re-creates the scene in 12:18–21 before the eyes of the hearers and enables them to inhabit and experience that scene in powerful ways. The selection of words, their arrangement, and the use of figures all suggest that the pssage does more than simply reporting or conveying information. The shape of the passage—its distinctive sylistics features and devices—draws the hearers into a textual experience marked by its appeal to the imagination and the emotions.[1] The emphasis on God's powerful speech—speech that both shakes earth and heaven and confronts the hearers—reflects the nature of the one who speaks and the solemnity of the location of that speech, instilling a sense of awe in the hearers..

The ominous and moving imagery, strange vocabulary and at times jolting sentence structure reinforce the stirring representation of the place to which the hearers have come. In short, the emotion and imagery, word choice and sentence arrangement in Heb 12:18–29, provide more than a brief literary access to the scenes described; they allow the hearers to perceive their empirical existence, especially their communal gatherings and the hardships that accompany those gatherings, in a new way.

Orientation to Hebrew 12:18–29

As pointed out in chapter one, Hebrews 12:18–29 stands out from its immediate literary context. The author's use of the indicative mood in 12:18 interrupts the hortatory tone, which characterizes Heb 12:1–17 and recommences in Heb 12:28. Building on the catalogue of the faithful in Heb 11, the author presents the appropriate response with a

[1] For the notion of "textual experience," see Steven M. Wasserstrom, "The Medium of the Divine." Pages 75–82 in *Experientia, Volume 1: Inquiry Into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Frances Flannery, Colleen Shantz, and Rodney Alan Werline, ed; Symposium Series 40. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 75–82.

command: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (12:1). Jesus models the type of endurance required for the race (12:2) and considering his example mitigates the onset of fatigue and exhaustion (12:3).

The faithful of Heb 11 and the faithfulness of Jesus's endurance provide positive examples for the hearers addressed in Heb 12:4–6. Although they have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in their struggle, they face the danger of wavering commitment. In an extended metaphor of God's parental concern for the audience, the author likens their suffering to God's pedagogical intention for them, which ultimately proves their origin from God (12:7–11).

The re-imagining of the audience's experience of struggle as pedagogy leads to a series of commands in 12:12–17. The author calls attention to the audience's bodies—their hands, knees, and feet once incapacitated, paralyzed, and twisted. Bodies now revived symbolize the physical and spiritual resolve required of the hearers. Building on the metaphor of the race in 12:1, the author charges them to do whatever is necessary to keep going, to keep struggling. Their struggle is not easy, but the author draws on several resources—exhortation and reminder, censure and teaching, examples positive and negative—to help them continue in their endurance.

Many of the exhortations have a communal focus. They must do whatever they can to keep the peace with one another and to preserve their holiness (12:14). As hands, knees, and feet required restoration, so also the audience is urged to avoid anything that might enervate their striving together. They must be attentive to those who risk falling from the grace of God; they must resist the root of bitterness that creates discord and sullies them; and they must repel sexual immorality and godlessness (12:15–16). The author presents Esau as the negative counterpart to both the faithful of Heb 11—who set their hope on things unseen (11:1)—and to the response required of the hearers (12:1–11). Esau, in

contrast to both, gave up his intangible birthright for the momentary satisfaction of tangible food (12:17).

It is striking to note how the contrast between the visible and the invisible, central to Heb 11, continues through much of Heb 12:1–17: a call to run a race with invisible spectators (12:1); a reminder to look upon the mysterious reality of Jesus's own endurance and session at God's right hand (12:2); a demand to see earthly struggle as proof of and training for one's heavenly origin and destination (12:4–11); a warning against concealed dangers that threaten the welfare of the gathered community—discord, bitterness, sexual immorality, godlessness. Throughout, the emphasis is on how these invisible realities effect, give meaning, and transform the realities of the audience's visible, sensible lives.

It is not surprising, then, that the author's description of the two locations of God's speech (12:18–24) and the two shakings (12:25–27) rest on similar contrasts between the visible and the invisible as well. The author's depiction of the first location (Heb 12:18–21) draws language and imagery from traditions associated with God's theophany at Sinai or Horeb.[2] Although these earlier traditions are reconfigured, the description of the first location of God's speech in Heb 12:18–21 can be understood as imitation, which Longinus identifies as one way of forming impressive ideas.[3] The description of the first location of God's speech draws attention to its sensible aspects. In contrast, the description of the second location of God's speech (12:22–24) emphasizes the invisible or intangible aspects of Mount Zion. It is to this second location of God's speech that the hearers "have come" (προεληλύθατε, 12:22; cf. 12:18). The warning to heed God's speech (12:25–29) also builds on the contrast between the seen and the unseen, although in a more implicit way. The

[2] For the relationship between Sinai and Horeb in the Hebrew Bible, see Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper One, 1985). In the exegesis that follows, I will adopt the admittedly awkward phrase "Sinai/Horeb" to refer to traditions that have been reconfigured to describe the first location of God's speech in Heb 12:18–21.

[3] See *Subl.* 13–14 and discussion below.

sensible shaking of the earth at the first location of God's speech (12:26) stands in contrast to the more intangible shaking of both the earth and the heavens that is promised in Hagg 2:6 (12:27). God's presence at the first location in sensible fire (12:18) stands in contrast to the enigmatic nature of God as a "consuming fire" (12:29), who the hearers are called to worship.

The example of Esau echoes throughout Heb 12:18–29, demanding from the hearers a fundamental shift in orientation to their experience. The contrast between the sensible and the intangible, the visible and the invisible, emphasizes the significance of things not seen (Heb 11:1). It is in this regard that Esau failed. He focused too much on what could be seen. He abandoned his intangible and precious identity as the first born (πρωτοτόκια) for a single tangible meal (βρῶσις μία). Hebrews 12:18–29 represents and invites the hearers to experience unseen realities, re-orienting them to intangible but priceless realities. This literary, imaginative, and emotional experience of the unseen contrasts with the sensible needs and threats that press in all around them. By "moving" the hearers into the place where God speaks and calling attention to the hearers' receptivity to that speech, Hebrews 12:18–29 provides the basis for the exhortations to endurance and solidarity with the assembly in the verses that surrounding it.

Locating God's Speech: Exegesis of Heb 12:18–29

The connection between Heb 12:18–29 and the material that precedes it is made explicit by the conjunction γάρ in verse eighteen.[4] The author begins with a description of the first location of God's speech, to which the hearers have not come (οὐ προσεληλύθατε). The verb προσέρχομαι plays an important role in Hebrews.[5] Elsewhere, the verb appears as

[4] Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (Meyers Komentar 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 669: "Allein so ergibt sich auch der vom Autor des Hebr—wie das einleitende γάρ (V. 18) zeigt—beabsichtigte Zusammenhang mit der am Beispiel des Esau verdeutlichten Warnung in VV. 16f."

[5] Koester notes three nuances to the verb's use in Hebrews: its relationship to Christian prayer, its priestly sense, and its royal sense; see Koester, *Hebrews*, 284. Similarly, Michel says the verb is "die Teilnahme

a cohortative subjunctive or as a participle. The two cohortative forms appear in the two "hinge" passages (4:14–16; 10:19–39) that summarize and introduce sections of the epistle.[6] In both cases, the author exhorts the hearers to draw near or approach God's presence with boldness and confidence because of Jesus's actions on their behalf (4:16; 10:22). The participial form in Heb 7:25 is similar; it declares the Son's ability to save completely (εἰς τὸ παντελὲς) those who draw near to God through him (τοὺς προσερχομένους δι᾽ αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ). In contrast, Heb 10:1 highlights the limits of the Levitical priesthood and its inability to make perfect those who draw near (οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι). The final occurrence of the verb is more general, insisting that it is necessary for the one who approaches God (τὸν προσερχόμενον τῷ θεῷ) to believe that God exists and that God rewards those who seek him (11:6). In short, the verb προσέρχομαι displays a relatively consistent meaning: it describes an approach to God often depicted in cultic terms; it highlights the limited value of the Levitical priesthood; and, it emphasizes the efficacious nature of Jesus's priesthood, which grants the hearers access to God's presence.

If the verb has the overall function just noted, its use in 12:18 and again in 12:22 is distinct in important ways.[7] Most obviously, the verb appears in the indicative mood, not

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am Gottesdienst der Gemeinde: im Bekenntnis, im Gebet, in der Taufe und Eucharistie naht man sich Gott;" see Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer: Übersetzt und Erklärt* (12th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966 [1936]), 313. Johnson suggests the use of the verb in 12:18, 22 serves as "the climax to the series of statements concerning 'approaching the throne of grace' (4:6) that is God's presence;" see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 328.

[6] Although not entirely determinative of the structure, Heb 4:14–16 and the parallel (but extended) passage in Heb 10:19–39 play an important role. As hinges, these have both a summative function and an anticipatory one. The "throne of grace" in Heb 4:16 thus recalls the earlier mention of the Son's priestly session at God's right hand (1:1–4) but also introduces the much more developed discussion of the Son's high priestly identity and function found in Heb 5–10. The author's mention of God's promises (10:23), the concern for the assembly (10:25), and the hearers' hardship (10:32–39) all anticipate what is developed more fully in Heb 11–13.

[7] While Grässer does not fully discount the cultic sense in 12:18, 22, he does note rightly that the cultic sense is "nicht univok gebrauchte" and that the perfect tense makes the occurrences in Heb 12 "gleichwohl kontrovers diskutiert" (Grässer, *Hebräer*, 3:303). He makes a similar point on the use of the verb in 12:22 (3:310). The use in Hebrews 12:18–21 presents the most problems for the cultic sense, since "sind eindeutig zur Sphäre des Kultischen gehörende Elemente nicht erkennbar" (303–304). Lane more confidently emphasizes the "cultic nuance" of Heb 12:18–21 since "the Sinai event was understood in terms of a solemn covenant ceremony" (Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:459). Spicq notes the likely role of Deut 4:11 LXX, but moves quickly to consider the antithetical typology of Sinai-Zion, which provided "un schème cultuel très ancien relatif à la

the subjunctive mood.[8] In addition, the use of the verb in Heb 12:18, 22 describes not the *manner* by which the hearers approach God, as was done earlier in epistle (i.e. with confidence, with true hearts, etc.). Rather, the verb in Heb 12 more fully calls attention to the *location* to which they have approached. This more spatial connotation of προσέρχομαι resembles in particular the use of the term in Deut 4:11. Although the perfect tense is used in Heb 12:18, 22 and the aorist tense is used in Deut 4:11 LXX, in both cases the verb indicates the locations to which the hearers have drawn near. As will become more clear below, Longinus's treatise calls into clearer relief the sense in which the hearers "have come" to the place where God speaks *and* to the community of other hearers.

Experiencing the First Location of God's Speech (12:18–19a)

The description of the location to which the hearers have not come—later textual traditions add ὄρει for the sake of clarity[9]—draws from the Sinai/Horeb traditions found in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The first word (ψηλαφωμένῳ) used to describe this location, however, squarely locates the description within the context of Heb 11–12. The adjectival participle does not appear in either Exodus or Deuteronomy.[10] The author insists that the

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montagne" (Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:403).

[8] The switch to the indicative from the subjunctive does not receive as much attention in the commentaries as does the significance of the perfect tense in Heb 12:18, 22, particularly in comparison to the aorist tense in Deut 4:11 LXX. See, e.g. Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer* (HNT 14; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1984), 430; Weiss, *Hebräer*, 670. Attridge suggests the verb may derive from Deut 4:11 LXX and that the perfect tense "indicates that the action, and the relationship it symbolizes, has begun and is still in effect" (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 372). See similarly, Lane, *Hebrews*, 459; James W. Thompson, *Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 267. DeSilva views the perfect tense of the verb in 12:18, 22 as "a sort of conclusion to the invitations to 'draw near'" elsewhere in the epistle; see DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 465. In his comments on Heb 12:22, Koester notes the significance of the perfect tense: it is rhetorical, adds vividness, and through the "power of his language" brings the hearers to God's presence (*Hebrews*, 550). It is curious, though, that the rhetorical, vivid, and effective power of the perfect tense applies *only* to the occurrence in 12:22 and not the one in 12:18.

[9] Several witnesses add ὄρει: D, K, L, P, Ψ, 104, 365, 630, 1241, 1505, 1739, 1881, 𝔐, vg[cl], sy[h]. Other early manuscripts attest to its omission: p[46], ℵ, A, C, 048, 33, 81, 1175, lat, sy[p], co. The presence of ὄρει in some witnesses should be understood as a later addition that aligns v. 18 more closely to v. 22. See the discussion in Attridge (*Hebrews*, 371, 372). Both Attridge and Lane suggest that the omission of Sinai (or mountain) is intentional. Lane thinks that it adds emphasis to the "tangible and sensory aspects" of the description (*Hebrews,* 2:460) while Attridge suggests the omission "focuses attention on the positive pole of the antithesis" (*Hebrews*, 372).

[10] Attridge suggests the possible influence of the "palpable darkness (ψηλαφητὸν σκότος)" associated with the plagues in Exod 10:21 LXX (*Hebrews*, 372); see similar notes in Koester (*Hebrews,* 543), Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:460), and Moffatt (Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 214).

hearers have not come to something that is literally "touchable."[11] Borrowing imagery and language from the Sinai/Horeb traditions, the phenomena described in Heb 12:18–19a involve more than the sense of touch, however, drawing on sights (fire, darkness, a tempest) and sounds (a blowing of a trumpet, the sounds of words) as well. The list calls attention to the sensible or empirical aspects of the theophany at Sinai/Horeb.

The author's use of these earlier traditions is apparent, but not without certain reconfigurations. The author presents a fuller description of the first location by drawing imagery from both Deut 4 and Exod 19. On one hand, reference to fire, darkness, storm, and sound (πυρός, γνόφος, θύελλα, and φωνή) emerge from the account of Mount Horeb found in Deuteronomy.[12] Although the textual tradition is not entirely stable, it seems most likely that the author of Hebrews has replaced the word σκότος found in Deuteronomy with the related but rarer word, ζόφος.[13] The author of Hebrews may have opted for ζόφῳ for its aural quality, since it creates an assonant phrase with γνόφῳ.[14] This phrase resembles the

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[11] ψηλαφάω frequently appears in biblical Greek with the nuance of physically touching something. See, e.g. Gen 27:12, 21, 22 (Isaac's touching Jacob); Psa 113:15; 134:17; Wis 15:15; Luke 24:39; 1 John 1:1. Often the verb is translated in reference to "groping" in the darkness: Deut 28:29; Job 5:14; 12:25; Nah 3:1; Isa 59:10; Acts 17:27. This usage occurs as well in other early Christian literature: Ign. *Smyrn.* 3:2; Herm. *Sim.* 9.6; *Pre. Pet.* 7. Cf. LSJ, s.v. ψηλαφάω. For the sense of "tangible" or "touchable," see especially the discussion in Thompson, "Eschatology of Hebrews." Many commentators follow Thompson in understanding ψηλαφωμένῳ as an indicator of the dualistic orientation of Hebrews; see, e.g. Attridge (*Hebrews*, 372), Braun (*Hebräer*, 430), Grässer (*Hebräer,* 3:304), Johnson (*Hebrews,* 329), Spicq (*Hébreux,* 2:403–4), Weiss (*Hebräer,* 671). Lane contests Thompson's suggestion that ψηλαφωμένῳ has distinctly metaphysical overtones related to Greek philosophical training (see Thompson, "Eschatology of Hebrews," 47). Lane suggests that Thompson "imports a philosophical tradition as the key to an exegetical tradition." Lane replaces Thompson's "philosophical tradition" with a theological one: "Sinai and Zion are extended metaphors that exhibit the differences in quality between the relationship to God under the old and new covenants, respectively" (Lane, *Hebrews,* 2:461). Whether Thompson overplays the philosophical influence or Lane undervalues it, the tangible, sensible nature of the event is evident throughout the description in Heb 12:18–21.

[12] See Deut 4:11 (καὶ <u>προσήλθετε</u> καὶ ἔστητε ὑπὸ τὸ ὄρος, καὶ τὸ ὄρος ἐκαίετο <u>πυρὶ</u> ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, σκότος, <u>γνόφος</u>, <u>θύελλα</u>, <u>φωνὴ</u> μεγάλη) and 5:22 (…ἐν τῷ ὄρει ἐκ μέσου τοῦ <u>πυρός</u>, σκότος, <u>γνόφος</u>, <u>θύελλα</u>, <u>φωνὴ</u> μεγάλη, καὶ οὐ προσέθηκεν).

[13] Some manuscripts replace ζόφος with a form σκότος (p^{46}, Ψ, $ℵ^2$, D^1, L, 630, 1505, 1739, 1881, 𝔐), likely as an attempt to better harmonize the version Heb 12:18 with Deut 4:11; 5:22. Two witnesses omit ζόφος entirely (K, d).

[14] The word ζόφος occurs rarely in the Greek Bible. It does not occur in the LXX and it occurs in the NT only here and in 2 Pet 2:4, 17 and Jude 6, 13. 2 Peter and Jude appear to borrow the noun from apocalyptic traditions in which it describes the utterly dark prison in which rebellious angels and stars are confined until the day of judgment. For example, Johnson notes the association of γνόφος with the "darkness of the nether regions" (*Hebrews*, 329). The use of ζόφος is likely intentional. Attridge suggests the author's intentional use of ζόφος increases the "foreboding imagery" (*Hebrews*, 373). Moffat suggests that ζόφος is a "poetical word" (215). Lane similarly calls ζόφος a "more euphonic word" (*Hebrews*, 461), which creates a

earlier assonant phrase, ψηλαφωμένῳ καὶ κεκαυμένῳ.[15] On the other hand, reference to the trumpet (σάλπιγξ) from the mountain occurs in Exod 19:16, 19a.[16] The result is an expanded depiction of the place from which God speaks that calls attention to the sensible manifestations of God's speaking presence.

Many interpretations are content to identify the source material used in the description of the first location of God's speech and the author's reconfiguration of it, similar to my discussion above. Greater attention to the form of language, however, provides more insight into its particular function and effect. In the first place, the repetition of καὶ and the use of short words (two or three syllables) in Heb 12:18–19a creates a staccato effect in the description of the first location of God's speech. The text moves from one image to the next in quick, almost chaotic succession. The description is more episodic than linear. This fast-moving description resembles Longinus's approval of Homer's "sustained energy" in the *Illiad* and "the consistent sublimity which never sinks into flatness, the flood of moving incidents in quick succession, the versatile rapidity and actuality, brimful images drawn from real life" (*Subl.* 9.13). The description in Heb 12:18–19a resembles the *Iliad*'s vigor and energy, especially through its quick succession of images.

"euphonic world play" with γνόφος that can hardly be reproduced in English (*Hebrews*, 2:441). Michel notes the possible alliteration created by ζόφος as well (*Hebräer*, 314).

[15] For Longinus's discussion of word arrangement, see *Subl.* 39–42. Though much about this discussion remains obscure to modern readers, Fyfe explains Longinus's intention is to highlight the "aural effect of good composition, the melody of words." See Longinus, *Subl*, 254.

Assonance is not confined to this first verse, but occurs elsewhere in the passage as well: ὄρει καὶ πόλει...πανηγύρει (v. 22); πρωτοτόκων ἀπογεγραμμένων...πάντων...δικαίων τετελειωμένων (v. 23); Ἰησοῦ...ῥαντισμοῦ (v. 24); σαλευομένων...πεποιημένων (v. 27). Throughout, assonance accentuates the aural quality of these verses and the care with which they have been arranged.

[16] Reference to God's voice (φωνή) occurs also in Exod 19:19b. Lane emphasizes the phrase φωνῇ ῥημάτων indicates the "sound of words" was indiscernible to the first hearers (*Hebrews*, 2:462). Attridge, in contrast, differentiates between the sounds made by the "indistinct instrument" with the "meaningful 'voice, with words'" (*Hebrews*, 373). Many commentators (e.g. Attridge, Grässer, Moffatt, Weiss *ad loc*) identify Deut 4:12 as the source of the phrase in Heb 12:19a: "And the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words (φωνὴν ῥημάτων) but you did not notice a likeness, only a voice" (NETS). The author's depiction of the first hearers' response in 12:19b–20 reveals the superiority of Attridge's interpretation. Lane, following Casey ("Eschatology in Hebrews 12:14–29: An Exegetical Study"), pushes the contrast between the first and second locations of God's speech too far, doubting that the first hearers even had an encounter with God (*Hebrews*, 2:462).

In addition, the reconfigured version in Hebrews witnesses the addition of καί throughout that is not present in the original Sinai/Horeb traditions.[17] The modification adds space between the descriptors and prevents what Longinus calls "extreme conciseness (ἡ συγκοπή)," which diminishes the intended effects of sublime rhetoric (*Subl.* 42.1). Even though the images appear rapidly, the addition of καί prevents the phrases from being, in the words of Longinus, "too close-packed and concise" (*Subl.* 41.3). The addition of καί calls even more attention to the rapid presentation of sensuous phenomena, which enhances the stirring, vigorous picture of the first location of God's speech.

What is more, the description of the first location of God's speech depends on the figure of periphrasis (literally "speaking around"). While the second location is named—"Mount Zion and the city of the living God" (Heb 12:22), the first location is *never* named.[18] While interpreters are quick to identify Heb 12:18–19a as a description of Sinai or Horeb, it is important to note that the possible effect of periphrasis here:

> That periphrasis contributes to sublime rhetoric (ὑψηλοποιόν), no one, I fancy, would question...periphrasis often chimes in with the literal expression of our meaning (τῇ κυριολογίᾳ) and gives it a far richer note, especially if it is not bombastic or discordant but agreeably in harmony.[19]

Like other figures, Longinus explains that periphrasis adds emotion and excitement to discourse (*Subl.* 29.2). The use of periphrasis here also intensifies the emotional tenor of the text. Rather than naming the first location Sinai or Horeb, the author describes it with vivid

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[17] Koester notes how the repetition of καί "lends grandeur" to the description of the second location of God's speech (Mount Zion), but does not make a similar note about the effect of καί here. It is not clear, however, why the effect of both might not be similar. The repetition of καί in both "gives the impression that the author could continue indefinitely" (*Hebrews*, 550n448). Russell, commenting on Longinus's view of polysyndeton, suggests that the addition of conjunctions can have both a lengthening effect and evince the "effect of repeated blows" (Russell, *'Longinus'*, 136).

[18] The author's comparison of the two locations of God's speech is distinct in this regard. Elsewhere, the author of Hebrews adopts a more direct mode of comparison. This is evident, for example, in the extended comparison of the selection for and activities of the Levitical priesthood and those of Jesus's priesthood (Heb 5–10).

[19] *Subl.* 28.1. Quintilian's note about the meaning and nature of *periphrasis* highlights its effect in Heb 12:18–19a. He defines this "circuitous mode of speech" that uses "a number of words to describe something for which one, or at any only a few words of description would suffice" (*Instit.* 8.6.59). Although it can be used to conceal something indecent, the more relevant effect of *periphrasis* for Heb 12:18–19a is its "decorative effect" commonly employed by the poets (*Instit.* 8.6.60).

images of dangerous phenomena—fire, darkness, and tempest—and auditory phenomena no less threatening—the sounding of trumpets and commanding speech.

Even though the author negates the first location's relevance for the audience ("you have *not* come"), the manner in which the author presents the first location through stirring, rapid images transforms it into what Longinus calls a "vivid actuality" (*Subl.* 25.1). The author's descriptive imagery brings the hearer into the scene described in 12:18–19a. Through imitation and imagination, the hearers experience the "actuality" of the description, not simply the narration of a past event. As greater attention to the style of 12:19b–21 make even more clear, the description of the *event* or *location* of God's speech slips into the representation of an experience. Although the author says that the hearers have not come to the first location of God's speeech, the manner in which the text represents that location leads the hearers to re-experience not only the powerful imagery but also the powerful sense of awe created by such a representation.

The Response of the First Hearers (Heb 12:19b–21)

Having described the sensible phenomena associated with God's speech, the author proceeds to describe the first hearers' response to it. It is not their response to what they *see* that concerns the author, but what they *hear*: "...at which the hearers begged that a word not be added to them, for they could not bear what had been commanded: 'And if a beast should touch the mountain, it shall be stoned'" (Heb 12:19b–20). In Heb 12:18-19a, the author presents rapid images of awesome phenomena. Here, the author is far less imagistic, focusing instead on the emotional response of the hearers.

According to the author of Hebrews, the first hearers respond in desperation. They beg (παραιτέομαι) for the cessation of speech.[20] The author of Hebrews here imitates (and

[20] For the translation of παραιτέομαι as "beg," see the concise discussion in Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:462–63), which includes a brief list of interpreters who prefer to understand the verb here as "refuse" or "reject," akin to the sense of the verb in 12:25. Other interpreters who prefer "beg" here, include: Attridge (*Hebrews*, 373); Johnson who translates it as "request" (*Hebrews*, 329); Cf. Moffatt (*Hebrews*, 214), Koester (*Hebrews*, 543),

reconfigures) the account of God's speech found in Deut 5:22–33,[21] which describes how the Law was given to the people of Israel from the mountain written on the two stone tablets and given to Moses. God's voice from the fire-covered mountain causes the people to respond in fear:

> And now let us not die. For this great fire will consume us; if we continue to hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we will die. For what flesh, which has heard the voice of the living God when he speaks from the midst of fire, as we have, shall also live? (Deut 5:25–26, NETS)

According to Deuteronomy, the Israelites request for the cessation of God's speech, while self-interested ("let us not die"), is reverent. Their fear of death relates to the uniqueness of the encounter—"This day we have seen that God will speak to a person, and he will live" (Deut 5:24, NETS). Continuing to hear God's speech (ἐὰν προσθώμεθα ἡμεῖς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν φωνὴν κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν) is dangerous (Deut 5:25). The Israelites' desire for the cessation of God's speech in Deut 5 is about survival rather than their willingness to obey what is being said. Their request stems from the terrifying realization that God is speaking to them from the mountain and that such an encounter *should* be fatal. Mortal flesh should not be able to hear God's voice and live.[22]

This brief overview of the account found in Deut 5 indicates how Heb 12 reframes the scene. First, the author of Hebrews presents the hearers' response in a more negative manner. The people's request in Hebrews is no longer one of reverence but of utter desperation.[23] The repetition of παραιτέομαι in 12:25, with its more seditious connotation,

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Braun (*Hebräer*, 432), and Grässer (*Hebräer*, 308) who prefer "refused."

[21] Other interpreters suggest that the author has Exod 19–20 in mind. See, e.g. Attridge (*Hebrews*, 373); Johnson (*Hebrews*, 328–29). Cf. Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:462–63); Grässer (*Hebräer*, 3:307); Moffatt (*Hebrews*, 215); Spicq (*Hébreux*, 2:404); Weiss (*Hebräer*, 672) who note the likely influence of both Exod 19 and Deut 5.

[22] Other interpretations from the Second Temple period also emphasize the positive, even pious nature of their response. For example, see *Reworked Pentateuch* (4Q158 frg. 6, lines 1–5) in which God approves of the people's request.

[23] Lane explains: "According to the Deuteronomic account, God approved of their request... There is no suggestion of guilt in the text" (*Hebrews*, 2:462). Weiss regards the account in Hebrews in a similar fashion: "Was in der biblischen Erzählung als Ausdruck der Demut des Menschen vor Gott galt...wird hier—wie vor allem die Verwendung von παραιτεῖσθαι in V. 25 zeigt—als eine bewußte Abweisung jener φωνὴ ῥημάτων gewertet, als solche freilich bedingt durch den sinnenfälligen Schrecken der Ohrenzeugen" (*Hebräer*, 672).

suggests the desperate plea of the first hearers leads all too easily to outright rebellion. Second, the version in Hebrews suggests that the Israelites' request is more content-oriented than phenomenal. It is the nature of what is commanded (τὸ διαστελλόμενον) that the Israelites cannot endure (Heb 12:20a), not the threatening nature of God's speaking presence itself.

The content of God's message, moreover, resembles the account of God's speech in Exod 19, not Deut 5. The command about stoning (Heb 12:20b) is found in Exod 19:12–13. In Exodus 19, God directs Moses to prepare the people of Israel for God's descent to Mount Sinai. Exodus emphasizes the fearful prospect of God's presence, not just God's speech. The whole mountain is quarantined from beast and human alike; a limit is set at its base and it is kept holy (Exod 19:23). In contrast to Deut 5, the threat of death in Exod 19 is connected to touching the mountain, not to hearing God's voice.

Hebrews 12:19b–20 conflates the disparate accounts found in Deuteronomy and Exodus, but the conflation is not entirely obvious. Like the blending of traditions related to Sinai and Horeb discussed above, the allusion here is evocative but not precise. The author leads with "even if" (κἂν) implying a comparison from lesser to greater: if stoning is the punishment for a beast, how much worse is the punishment for a human being?[24] The effect of the allusion underscores that the first location is not simply a place of stunning visual and auditory phenomena; it is also a place of imminent danger. Again, by representing the scene in such an imagistic and sensuous way, the text moves the hearers into this place of danger.

Koester's observation—"The people's response is, understandably, negative: they refused any further message" (*Hebrews*, 549–50)—flattens the changes made by the author of Hebrews in the reconfiguration of Deut 5.

[24] Attridge: "In this context there is reference only to the lesser case, that of the 'beast' (θηρίον), but the *a fortiori* inference to the case of the human being is obvious" (*Hebrews*, 373). Weiss points out the unspoken implication (die unausgesprochene Folgerung) of the author's "free play with the original" (freier Wiedergabe der biblischen Vorlage), which suggests that if even a beast should not approach, how much more dangerous would it be for a human being (*Hebräer*, 673).

In Heb 12:21, the author focuses on the response of Moses. Once again, he draws on traditions found in the Septuagint, with allusions that are more evocative than precise. In Deuteronomy, Moses's speech is not from the foot of the mountain looking up, as it seems to be in Heb 12:21. Rather, Moses's utterance, "I am afraid," occurs after his descent from the mountain (Deut 9:19 LXX). Although the mountain is burning (Deut 9:15), Moses's response is prompted not by the sight of the mountain, but by the wrath of God (Deut 9:19). More specifically, it is the Lord's anger in response to the golden calf incident (see Deut 9:8–14) that causes Moses to be terrified.[25] The author of Hebrews not only re-imagines the cause of Moses's terror, he also intensifies the response of Moses, adding mention of his trembling (ἔντρομος) as well.[26]

Hebrews connects Moses's terror and trembling with the sight or spectacle (τὸ φανταζόμενον),[27] calling attention once again to the vivid nature of description in the

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[25] See Moffatt: "[The author] forgets that Moses uttered the cry of horror, not over the fearful spectacle of Sinai but at a later stage, over the worship of the golden calf" (*Hebrews*, 216). Attridge's comments are similar, though without assuming the author's forgetfulness: "The language in fact alludes to a remark of Moses on a later occasion, his descent from Sinai and discovery of the golden calf" (374). Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:463–64) summarizes three possible explanations for the epistle's deviation from the source texts (Deut 5; Exod 19), which do not mention Moses's fear. Given the author's freedom earlier in combining and reconfiguring his resource texts, the simplest answer seems to be that the author has transposed the mention of Moses's speech from a different context into the description of the first mountain to emphasize the terrifying nature of God's speaking presence. I am less confident, however, about the association made by Lane (and others) between fear and God's inaccessibility. As will become more apparent below, the author of Hebrews does not equate the Christian's access to God with a lack of fear, but rather that the Christian's encounter with the living God, even given the access granted by Jesus's priestly intervention, remains a fearful prospect (see Heb 10:31). Johnson is closer: "Such fear is not, indeed, to Moses' discredit. It is precisely such fear of God that recognizes the truth about reality and enables people of faith to resist in the face of human threats" (*Hebrews*, 330).

[26] The pair of adjectives appears in 1 Macc 13:2, referring to the response of the Jewish people facing Trypho's army. In Acts 7:32 ἔντρομος does modify Moses, but not in reference to the golden calf incident or the phenomena at Mt. Sinai/Horeb. Rather, Acts applies the adjective to Moses's response to the burning bush (cf. Exod 3:1–6).

[27] The verb φαντάζειν is a NT *hapax legomenon* and occurs only twice in the Septuagint (Wis 6:16; Sir 34:5). In Wisdom, the verb attains a neutral sense of "appear." In Sir 34, the verb has a more negative valence since it stands in parallel to the vanity of divinations, omens, and dreams. The verb is not, however, infrequent in the ordinary *koine*. It means to "make visible" or to "present to the eye or the mind" (see LSJ, s.v. φαντάζω). In the passive voice, the verb has an intransitive sense of to "become visible, appear" and often refers to the appearance of "extraordinary phenomena" (see BDAG, s.v. φαντάζω). Often, the verb relates to the appearance of a dream or strange events. See R. Bultmann and D. Lührmann, "φαντάζω, φάντασμα," *TDNT* 9:6. The editors calls attention to Herodotus, 7.15.2: "...for since I have turned me and repented, a vision comes haunting my sight (ὄνειρον φαντάζεταί μοι), that will in no wise consent that I should do as you counsel; and even now it has gone with a threat" (LCL: Godley); and Apollinus of Rhodes *Arg*. 4.1285: "...and bellowings are heard in sacred precincts (καὶ μυκαὶ σηκοῖς ἔνι φαντάζωνται)" (LCL: Race).

verses. While the substantive participle used here could plausibly refer to the "appearance" of God's wrath, Deut 9 does not use such language. Instead, it seems more likely that the author of Hebrews has reconfigured Moses's remark and applied it to a different episode. The author employs the rare verb φαντάζω to emphasize the awesome nature of the first location of God's speech,[28] perhaps for the sake of alliteration with φοβερόν.[29]

This fearful scene, and the emphasis on Moses's own fear, relates to other passages in Hebrews that mention terror or fear. Throughout Hebrews, the adjective φοβερός occurs in conjunction with God's presence, particularly God's judgment.[30] The adjective indicates the "terrifying expectation of judgment" and stands in parallel to a "a zealous fire that will consume the adversaries" (10:27). Given God's assured judgment (10:30), the author reminds the hearers that, "Falling into the hands of the living God is a terrifying thing (φοβερὸν)" (10:31). Although the adjective is not used, the terrifying nature of God's presence is underscored later in the passage under consideration: "For indeed, our God is a consuming fire" (12:29).[31]

In sum, the author goes to great lengths to emphasize the dangerous and fearful nature of the first location of God's speech through vivid description and the imagination. It will be recalled that Longinus identifies "vehement emotion" as the second source of sublime rhetoric (*Subl.* 8.1) and that he discusses the emotion of awe (τὸ δέος; δεινός) at length. Longinus's discussion of awe provides insight into the nature and function of terror or awe in Heb 12:18–29. For example, Longinus calls attention to Homer's description of

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Attridge notes that the verb is "used of extraordinary phenomena in Hellenistic literature" (*Hebrews*, 374n41).

[28] See similarly Attridge: "Whatever their source, the embellishments of the biblical account enhance the image of the awesome theophany" (*Hebrews*, 374).

[29] Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 216. Lane connects τὸ φανταζόμενον with the account of the burning bush found in Acts 7:30, which the author of Acts calls τὸ ὅραμα τὸ μέγα. Lane suggests the phrase form Acts is "roughly equivalent" to the phrase in Hebrews (*Hebrews*, 2:464).

[30] So, Lane: "The term φοβερόν conveys the connotation of profound dread at the prospect of an encounter with the living God. It is informed by its prior use in 10:27 and 31 in the context of divine judgment" (*Hebrews*, 2:463).

[31] For the nature of fear in Hebrews, see Patrick Gray, *Godly Fear: The Epistle to Hebrews and Greco-Roman Critiques of Superstition* (Academia Biblica 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

Hector in *Iliad* 15:

> But Hector shining all about with fire leapt among the throng, and fell on them, just as beneath the clouds a violent wave, swollen by the winds, falls on a swift ship, and it is all hidden by the foam, and the terrible blast of the wind roars against the sail, and the minds of the sailors shudder in their fear, for they are borne along only a short distance from death; so were the hearts of the Achaeans rent within their breasts. (*Il.* 15.623–629)

Longinus explains why Homer's description is so effective: "Homer...instead of defining the danger once and for all, depicts the sailors as being all the time, again and again, with every wave on the very brink of death" (*Subl.* 10.6). Longinus's example and comments are pertinent to the interpretation of Heb 12:18–21. His concern is not with Homer's description of Hector *per se*, but rather on the image of the wave used to describe Hector's fury in attacking his enemies. Homer's description of the wave is steeped in imagery and descriptive language—clouds, a violent and swollen wave, winds, foam, roaring sails. The description of Hector's fury as a powerful wave is said to place the audience within the scene described so that they too feel "only a short distance from death." This, for Longinus, is a quintessential example of τὸ δέος and its effects.

Longinus's example of Homer's description of Hector in the *Iliad* casts light on Heb 12:18–21. The use of imagery, though evocative, is no less terrifying. The moving imagery in 12:18–19a places the hearer "only a short distance from death," indicated by the dangerous sensible phenomena like fire and tempest. The use of the figure of periphrasis reinforces the vivid description. The author does not "define the danger once and for all" but rather *describes* it through the rapid presentation of images. The author of Hebrews links this terrifying description with the Israelite's inability to bear another word and Moses's own fear. Like God's living, active, and piercing word in Heb 4, God's speech in in Heb 12:18–21 is also threatening and dangerous.

The fearful nature of God's speech is not an anomoly for Hebrews nor does represent a relic of God's former ways of interacting with human beings, though many

have understood it in this way. Since John Chrysostom, interpreters have viewed the first location as a symbol of God's wrath and judgment, often in connection with the Law. In this interpretation, the second location is the opposite of the first in precisely this regard—it is not a fearful or terrifying location; rather, it signifies the Christian's gracious access to God's presence without fear. But, as will be made clear below, the description of the second location of God's speech is also not without elements of terror or awe.

The Description of the Second Location (Heb 12:22–24)

In Heb 12:22, the author turns to the second location of God's speech, the place to which the author claims the hearers *have* indeed come. Here for the first time the author mentions explicitly that they have come to a mountain (ὄρος), namely Mount Zion (Σιὼν ὄρει).[32] Mount Zion is identified with the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρνίῳ) and the entourage of otherworldly figures found there (12:22–24).

Although it is not entirely clear, it is likely that the three designations in verse 22 describe the same location.[33] Biblical tradition associates Mount Zion with Jerusalem as the city of God,[34] suggesting that Zion and Jerusalem in Heb 12:22 are used in apposition to one

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[32] Although this is the only reference to Zion in Hebrews, many interpreters have discerned implicit references to Zion elsewhere in the epistle. See, e.g. Son, *Zion Symbolism*, who devotes an entire monograph to the role of Zion symbolism in Hebrews. He understands Heb 12:18–24 to be the hermeneutical key to the author's argument as a whole. He finds the Sinai-Zion contrast elsewhere in Hebrews: in the Son's superiority to the angels, Jesus' superiority to Moses, Jesus' superior priesthood, and the role of Zion in the depiction of the heavenly Temple. He concludes: "The theological implication of Sinai and Zion brings together all the theological subjects under discussion" and functions to prove the superiority of Christ (202). Son's work offers important insights on Zion in Hebrews, but overstates its importance for bringing together all of the theological themes in Hebrews.

[33] Lane suggests the three designations (Zion, city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem) "are synonymous and should be treated as a unit" (*Hebrews*, 2:465). He notes as well the similar conclusions of Spicq, Kuss, Michel, and Bruce. Attridge suggests the pairing of mountain and city, which he aligns with seven other paired items in Heb 12:22–24 (*Hebrews*, 374n47). Johnson (*Hebrews*, 330–34) suggests a threefold characterization of the "place" to which they have come (Mount Zion, city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem), which the author joins to a fivefold characterization of those who inhabit the place (angels, the *ekklēsia*, the spirits, God, Jesus).

[34] For the parallel construction, see 2 Kings 19:21, 31; Psa 102:21; 135:21; 147:12; Isa 2:3; 4:3, 4; 10:12, 32; 24:23; 30:19; 31:9; 33:20; 37:22; 40:9; 41:27; 52:12; 64:10; Jer 26:18; 51:35; Lam 1:17; 2:10, 13; Joel 2:32; 3:16, 17; Amos 1:2; Mic 3:10, 12; 4:2; Zeph 3:14; Zech 1:14, 17; 8:3; 9:9; 1 Esd 8:8; 2 Esd 10:20. A notable exception to this parallel construction occurs in 1 Macc 6:48: "But the men from the army of the king went up to meet them in

another.[35] Zion-Jerusalem is frequently depicted as the location of God's presence,[36] the site of Israel's king,[37] and the place from which deliverance or salvation originates.[38] Two prophetic texts connect Zion-Jerusalem with God's powerful speech. In Amos 1:2, God's voice causes vegetation to wither and Mount Carmel to dry up. In Joel 3:16, Zion-Jerusalem is envisioned as the site of God's speech; God's speech there will shake the heavens and the earth, imagery strikingly close to the the citation of Hab 2:6 in Heb 12:26. Israel's writings most often depict Zion-Jerusalem as an earthly location.[39] Yet, as Levenson's important study suggests, Zion-Jerusalem is also a "junction" between heaven and earth, reflected already in the Hebrew Bible.[40] As the junction between the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem, Zion-Jerusalem is the place where the earthly and the heavenly interpenetrate.[41]

Interpreters often appeal the increased speculation into the notion of an ideal or heavenly Zion-Jerusalem in later Jewish and Christian literature to clarify the references here.[42] The precise origin of Jewish and Christian reflection on the heavenly Jerusalem is not clear, though there are some suggestive verses from the Hebrew Bible.[43] Some scholars

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Jerusalem, and the king camped in Judea and at Mount Sion" (NETS).

[35] The witness D* in fact omits the καί, indicating the possibility of such a reading.

[36] For Zion-Jerusalem as the location of God's presence, see Psa 50:2; 65:1; 74:2; 76:2; 84:7; 132:13; 135:21; Isa 18:7; 24:23; 52:8; 60:14; Jer 8:19; 31:6; Joel 2:1; 3:17; Mic 4:7; Zech 8:3; Sir 36:19.

[37] Psa 48:2; 110:2; Zech 9:9.

[38] Psa 14:7; 53:6; Isa 46:13; 59:20.

[39] See Porteous, "Jerusalem-Zion," 250.

[40] Levenson explains: "As the junction between heaven and earth, Zion, the Temple Mount, is a preeminent locus of communication between God and man" (Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 125). See also Ben C. Ollenburger, *Zion the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (JSOT Suppl. 41; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987).

[41] Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 141–42. Similarly, Porteous illustrates how the earthly Jerusalem mediated "the revelation of a transcendent God" (Porteous, "Jerusalem-Zion," 236).

[42] See Lorenzo DiTommaso, "New Jerusalem," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010) 797–799. DiTommaso provides a helpful overview of this speculation. He suggests a distinction between the restored Jerusalem and a utopian Jerusalem. A restored Jerusalem imagines the renewal of a physical city to a pristine state at some point in the future (see Isa 33:17–24; 44:24–28; 49:17; 52:9; 54:14; 60:1–22; 61:4; 62:1–11; 65:17–25; Jer 30–33; Amos 9:14–15; Zeph 3:20; Zech 1:17; 2:8; Tob 13; 4Q462 frg. 1, lines 14–19; the Apostrophe to Zion [11Q5 22.1–15; 4Q88 7.14–8.15]; 4 Bar 5; and the Animal Apocalypse [1 Eno 90:28–36]. The utopian Jerusalem is more ideal and distinct from the Jerusalem of history, often with an atemporal or pre-existent character to it (see Ezek 40–48 [esp. 48:16, 30, 15]; 1 Eno 90:36; the *New Jerusalem Text* [4Q554 + 4Q554a par. 5Q515]; *Reworked Pentateuch* [4Q365a], and the *Temple Scroll*; *Sib. Or.* 5.420, 433; Philo, *Somn.* 2.37–38; and Rev 21:2–22:5).

[43] E.g. Isa 49:16; 65:17–18; Psa 122:3. See also Mark Verman, "Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem in Philo and Paul: A Tale of Two Cities," in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Mysticism,*

take a minimalist approach to speculation on the heavenly Jerusalem, confining it to mostly Christian writers after the first-century CE.[44] Others, however, discern explicit or implicit reflection on the heavenly Jerusalem, especially in Jewish apocalyptic writing.[45] In late antiquity, both Judaism and Christianity move toward a more abstract view of the heavenly Jerusalem as utopian and pre-existent.[46]

Rather than looking for the meaning of "Mount Zion, heavenly Jerusalem" outside of the epistle,[47] it is far more helpful to look for its meaning within the logic of Hebrews

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Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism (ed. Daphna A. Arbel and Andrei A. Orlov; Ekstasis 2; New York; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011) 133–156. Verman identifies these verses as possible witnesses to the heavenly Jerusalem, but he concludes: "One would be hard pressed to identify any passages in the Tanakh that explicitly refer to heavenly Jerusalem" (134).

[44] Rivka Nor, writing on *2 Baruch*, represents a minimalist position: "A heavenly Jerusalem does not at all appear in Second Temple Literature; the same holds true for early talmudic sources, that is, in the Mishnah, the Jerusalem Talmud, or the Palestinian midrashim." See Rivka Nor, *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003), 26 (quoted by Verman, "Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem," 137). Ultimately, Verman supports the position that the concept of a heavenly, ideal Jerusalem was not present before the first-century CE. Rather, Philo provides the "earliest, datable references to the notion of heavenly Jerusalem" (141). For Philo, the "earthly Jerusalem became the terrestrial manifestation of the transcendent holy city of God" (156).

[45] Possible examples include *2 Baruch,* the *Testament of Dan*, and *4 Ezra*. In *2 Bar* 4:1–7, the Lord explains to Baruch that the city "carved" on God's hands (alluding to Isa 49:16) is not the earthly Jerusalem, but a pre-existent, heavenly city protected by God. This city, God explains, was first revealed to Adam before he sinned, then to Abraham, and finally to Moses on Mount Sinai (4:3–5). A similar sentiment appears in the *T. Dan* 5, but with a more pronounced sense of eschatological expectation. The chapter describes the "Lord's salvation" that results from the people returning to God (5:7–10). In addition to a time of peace and freedom for the saints (5:11), it is also a time when the saints will "refresh themselves in Eden" and the righteous will "rejoice in the New Jerusalem" (5:12). Here the parallel is not between Zion and Jerusalem but between Eden and the New Jerusalem, suggesting the pre-existent and heavenly origin of each. For *T. Dan* 5, God dwells in the Eden-New Jerusalem and the "Holy One of Israel" rules with humility and poverty (5:13). In *4 Ezra* 10, Ezra sees a vision of an "established city" with "huge foundations" (*4 Ezra* 10:27); an angel explains that he has seen the "city of the Most High" revealed to him (*4 Ezra* 10:54). Verman views other potential witnesses to a heavenly Jerusalem (e.g. the "New Jerusalem text," *Tob* 13, and the "Animal Apocalypse" from *1 Eno*) as earthly, not heavenly or preexistent, realities that were perhaps based on heavenly blueprints.

[46] DiTommaso, "New Jerusalem," 799.

[47] Mention of the "heavenly Jerusalem" is one of the many instances in Hebrews where scholars are divided regarding the basis of the author's world of thought: they differ as to whether the concept of the "heavenly Jerusalem" in Heb 12:22 has its origin in Jewish apocalypticism (see, e.g., Lane, *Hebrews)* or in a Platonic notion of the ideal world (see, e.g., Thompson, "Eschatology of Hebrews"). Barrett suggests a mediating position. The Platonic dualism assumed by many interpreters of Hebrews is not displaced entirely, but has been put in the service of early Christian eschatological thought. See Charles K Barrett, "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (ed. W.D. Davies and David Daube; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) 363-93. The secondary literature attempting to identify the author of Hebrews with either thought-world is substantial.

There are several problems with a strict dichotomy between apocalyptic and Platonic thought worlds, however. First, it insists on a rigid distinction between Judaism and Hellenism, which has come under increased scrutiny. Connected to this dichotomy is the view that anything Greek or Hellenistic is "alien" and therefore evidence of a corruption of the "pure" Jewish apocalyptic thought. Second, it rests on overly simplistic assumptions about Hellenistic philosophy, particularly the Platonism of Philo. Platonism was not the only Hellenistic philosophy with a notion of ideal or cosmic city; nor was Philo himself either "purely"

itself. Joshua Jipp, for example, argues for a strong connection between the mention of Mount Zion in Heb 12:22 and the function of the scriptural catena in Heb 1:5–14.[48] More than simply exalting the Son above the angels, Jipp finds in the catena of verses "a hymnic celebration of the Father's declaration of Jesus' sonship and his royal enthronement to the heavenly world" that is "critical for the entire logic of the author's argument and the symbolic world which the text creates."[49] The hearers' orientation at the foot of Mount Zion, first mentioned in chapter one and then again in chapter 12, creates a symbolic world that the hearers are invited to inhabit; a world marked by God's powerful speech, both the enthronement speech to the Son overheard by the audience and God's speech directed to the audience in chapter 12.

In addition, the heavenly Jerusalem and the city of the living God are also pertinent to the themes of cities and citizenship occurring elsewhere in the epistle. Abraham's faithful response to God, for example, is manifested in his willingness to set out for his promised inheritance, although he did not know exactly where he was going. The author of Hebrews identifies this inheritance not with a "promised land" as it is found in the Pentateuch, but with a promised city: "For he was awaiting the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb 11:10). Similarly, those who saw the promise from afar but did not receive it became strangers and sojourners (ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοί) upon the earth (11:13). Yet, their faithful response indicated that they too were seeking a homeland (ἡ πατρίς) (11:14). The land to which they are going is a superior one, a heavenly

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Platonic or representative of Platonism in the Hellenistic period. Third and finally, identifying Heb 12:22 as either apocalyptic or Platonic (Philonic) provides very little exegetical payoff. It often demands that both the author and the hearers of the epistle are very familiar with either tradition, which simply cannot be proven from the epistle itself.

More significantly, the reference to the heavenly Jerusalem (and the entourage in attendance) is itself evocative and underdeveloped in Hebrews, especially compared to other texts from Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity that display an interest in the heavenly Jerusalem. By importing themes or ideas about the heavenly Jerusalem from other traditions (whether apocalyptic or Platonic), it is possible to overlook or distort its significance here.

[48] Joshua W. Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14," *NTS* (2010): 557–575.

[49] Jipp, "Entrance into the Heavenly World," 558.

one, a city prepared by God (11:16). For Abraham and those who share his response, the heavenly city prepared by God—their true homeland—remains an object of anticipation, of faithful expectation. In short, an important feature of the disposition of the "cloud of witnesses" that surrounds the hearers (12:1–2) is their faithful expectation and active pursuit of the city built by God.

A similar view of the city of God appears in Heb 13. Since Jesus suffered outside the gates (ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθεν), the author exhorts the hearers also to go outside of the camp (ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς) and to bear the reproach that comes from association with him (Heb 13:12–13).[50] As justification for this exhortation, the author reminds the hearers that, "We do not have here a lasting city, but we are seeking the one that lasts" (13:14). As with the wilderness wanderers in Heb 11, the author here exhorts the hearers to take-up the hopeful pursuit of a city that cannot be seen, even if it leads to social alienation and ostracism.

Hebrews 11 and 13 provide important insight into the author's understanding of the "city of God" mentioned in Heb 12:22.[51] It is, above all, the city of God's promise, design, and creation. It is a lasting and superior city and homeland that motivates alienation from other cities and justifies the loss of goods and freedom. It is a city eagerly anticipated and actively pursued by the faithful. In this sense, it is both a city promised by God and a city "confessed" or "claimed" by the hearers. This claim—this active seeking after the lasting city—has caused the hearers to become sojourners on earth.[52]

The "city of the living God" is more than an ideal version of the earthly Jerusalem, and more than a future hope, however. The "city of the living God" conveys definitive

[50] "The abuse that comes from association with him" is admittedly an extended translation for τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ. Reference to reproach recalls the author's earlier exhortation in Heb 10:19–24 and the author's memory of the hearers' faithful responses in the past. Their response—aptly named in 10:23 as their "confession of hope" (ἡ ὁμολογία τῆς ἐλπίδος)—has led to the experience of suffering, public abuse, persecution, imprisonment, and loss of material goods (10:32–34). The author reminds the hearers of their commendable response in this time of hardship, when they cheerfully accepted the loss of goods knowing that they possessed something "better and more lasting" (κρείττονα ὕπαρξιν καὶ μένουσαν) (10:34).

[51] See similarly Grässer (*Hebräer*, 3:313); Johnson (*Hebrews*, 331); Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:466).

[52] This has been noted by Käsemann, *Wandering People*. While his attention to the motif of the wandering people of God is significant, his attempt to place the motif within pre-existing traditions is less convincing.

features of the hearers' identity. Many of the items listed in these verses emerge in discourse related to the ancient city and affirm the hearers' citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem. The hearers have come not simply to a myriad of angels—a trope found in prophetic and apocalyptic literature[53]—but more specifically to a myriad of angels "in festival" (μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων, πανηγύρει). The noun πανήγυρις has social and political undertones to it, often denoting a religious festival in connection with a national god.[54]

In addition, the author declares that the hearers have come to an assembly (ἡ ἐκκλησία) that has been enrolled in heaven (ἀπογράφω ἐν οὐρανοῖς), references that have significant social and political connotations. In many instances, ἡ ἐκκλησία refers to a basic governing body or assembly, often responsible for the well-being of a city. More generally,

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[53] E.g. 1 Eno 40:1; Dan 7:10; cf. Psa 68:17. Reactions to a seer's encounter with angels are often negative: Daniel loses all of his strength, his complexion changes, and he falls into a trance (Dan 10:7–9); Enoch's face changes its appearance because of his fear (*2 Eno* 1:3–8). Many New Testament texts retain the fearful nature of encounters with angelic beings; see Matt 28:1–8; Luke 1:11-12; 2:9-10; 24:5; Act 10:4. Helpful overviews of Israelite and early Jewish thoughts about angels can be found in Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York; London: Doubleday, 1992) 248–253; Archie T. Wright, "Angels," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2010) 328–331; Duane F. Watson, "Angels: New Testament," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York; London: Doubleday, 1992) 253–255. See also Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (AGJU 55; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), esp. 32–34, 102.

[54] See LSJ, s.v. πανήγυρις. In the prophets Hosea and Amos, πανήγυρις relates to religious festivals (Hos 2:13; 9:5; Amos 5:21). The context, however, views these religious festivals negatively, e.g. "I have hated, I have despised your feasts, and I will not smell at your festivals" (Amos 5:21, NETS). Ezek 46:11 contains a more positive connotation, depicting a religious festival in the restored temple precinct. Πανήγυρις is a New Testament *hapax legomenon*.

Thucydides speaks of the Corcyraeans's disregard for the "common games (ἐν πανηγύρεσι ταῖς κοιναῖς)," which earned them the ire of the Corinthians (*Thucy*. 1.25.3 [LCL: Smith]). He employs πανήγυρις later in his description of how the Eleans deployed armed guards to prevent the Lacedaemonians's entrance into the sanctuary of Olympus Zeus (5.50.2). In this context, Thucydides employs πανήγυρις as a near synonym to "festival" (ἡ ἑορτή): "...and there came to their aid also some Argives and Mantineans, a thousand of each, and some Athenian cavalry that were at Arpina awaiting the festival (ὑπέμενον τὴν ἑορτήν). And great fear came upon the assembly (τῇ πανηγύρει) that the Lacedaemonians might come with arms..." (5.50.4). Dio Cassius recounts how Caesar celebrated the festival in honor of the victory at Actium (τὴν πανήγυριν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τῇ πρὸς τῷ Ἀκτίῳ) with Agrigga (53.1.4). Philo refers to the pain caused by those who cannot observe a feast (ἐν ἑορταῖς τοῖς μὴ δυναμένοις ἑορτάζειν) and partake in the"cheerful gaiety, which the festal gathering demands (ἱλαρᾶς εὐθυμίας, ἣν πανήγυρις ἐπιζητεῖ)" (*Flacc.* 118 [Colson]). Philo speaks as well of the crown awarded by a πανήγυρις unlike any other human πανήγυρις to those who defeat pleasure (*Leg. all.* 2.108). Josephus also uses πανήγυρις to describe the assembly of people at a public festival: "So, on the approach of a public festival (ἡ ἑορτή), when it was customary for women also to join the general assembly (ἡ πανήγυρις), she made illness an excuse to her husband, in quest of solitude and leisure to solicit Joseph..." (*Ant.* 2.3.3 §45 [LCL: Thackeray). Josephus also speaks of the high priest's presence at the "national festival (ἑορτὴ πάτριος)" and at the "annual assemblage of all the people (πανήγυρις ἦν πάνδημος ἀγομένη δι᾽ ἔτους)" (*Bell.* 5.5.7 §230 [LCL: Thackeray]).

it denotes a casual gathering of people or a congregation.[55] Reference to other collectives and identity markers in the immediate context supports a political or technical connotation here. In popular usage, including the New Testament (Luke 2:1, 3, 5), the verb ἀπογράφω also has political or civic connotation. It denotes official registration with a city or region for tax purposes. Spicq explains how "...la formule juridique... évoquant le nom des citoyens officiellement consignés sur les registres de la cité."[56] Each of these words—with their social and civic connotations—confirm the symbolic nature and social function of the "city of God" in Heb 12:22.

In Heb 12:23b–24, the author enumerates additional things to which the hearers have come. The list moves from abstract to particular: God, to spirits, to Jesus, and to blood; each of these items is modified with adjectival phrases.

First, the hearers have come to God, the judge of all. The image of God as judge occurs elsewhere in Hebrews. God's word is likened to a double-edged sword capable of judging the thoughts and the intentions of the heart (4:12). God's attention to the hearers' own love and sacrifice is guaranteed by God's identity as a just judge (6:10). There is a fearful prospect of God's judgment for those who spurn the Son of God (10:26–31) and those who dishonor marriage (13:4). The image of God as judge surrounded by a myriad of angels, along with insistence that God is a "consuming fire" later in 12:29, confirms that the second location is no less dangerous than the first.[57]

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[55] See BDAG, s.v. εκκλησία. Johnson emphasizes the political sense of the word in Heb 12:23: "The pilgrims approach as well another common feature of Greek civic life, namely the *ekklēsia*, the official gathering of the citizens or their representatives" (*Hebrews*, 332). Lane calls the ἐκκλησία here has a "nontechnical sense of 'a gathering' or 'an assembly' (*Hebrews*, 2:468).

[56] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:407.

[57] So rightly, Moffatt: "It is implied that he [sic] is no easy-going God. The contrast is not between the mere terrors of Sinai and the gracious relationship of Sion, but between the outward, sensuous terror of the former and the inward intimacy of the latter—an intimacy which still involves awe" (*Hebrews*, 218). Many emphasize how this verse depicts God as the eschatological judge of all (e.g. Johnson, *Hebrews*, 333), though some view this with a positive connotation. See, e.g., Lane: "The festive associations of πανηγύρει, 'to a festal gathering,' in the immediate context are reassuring; they imply an approving judgment for the assembled multitude" (*Hebrews*, 2:470). See similarly Attridge (*Hebrews,* 376); Grässer (*Hebräer*, 3:318–19); Weiss (*Hebräer*, 680–81). Spicq retains the eschatological dimension of God's judgment, but emphasizes how Heb 12:23

Next, the author says that the hearers have come to the spirits of the righteous who have been made perfect (πνεύμασιν δικαίων τετελειωμένων).[58] The substantive use of the adjective δίκαιος occurs three times in Hebrews. The singular form appears in the quotation of Hab 2:4 LXX in Heb 10:38—"...my righteous one will live from faith..." This use of δίκαιος seems to inform the next occurrence in 11:4, which speaks of Abel's offering made by faith which witnessed to his righteousness.[59] These two references inform the intended meaning of δικαίων in 12:23. The term indicates those who respond to God and God's promises in the ways modeled elsewhere in Hebrews, particularly in chapter 11; it signals as well the right relationship between the "righteous ones" and God, the judge.

It is not clear how the righteous spirits relate to the *ekklesia* of the firstborn mentioned previously. On one hand, Attridge suggests the righteous spirits refers to the post-mortem faithful, while the *ekklesia* includes the living audience addressed by the epistle.[60] On the other hand, Johnson suggests the two phrases both apply to the same group. The difference depends on the proper meaning of "spirits." For Attridge, this refers to the disembodied souls of those who have died. The reference to the "cloud of witnesses" (12:1) that may refer to the deceased heroes of faith enumerated in Heb 11 supports this view. According to Johnson, "spirits" refers not to post-mortem existence, but a new form of earthly existence: "...the way they now live is as God lives, not in their former mortal

depicts God as "l'unique souverain de la πόλις θεοῦ ζῶντος" (*Hébreux*, 2:408).

[58] A minority group of witnesses (D*, b, and vg[mss]) refer to a single spirit (πνεύματι), likely due to later attempts to shape the list into a more explicitly Trinitarian formula. Even among witnesses that have the plural form (spirits), there are several variant readings. D* and (Hil) refer to the spirit of "righteous ones who have been established" (δικαίων τεθεμελιωμένων). In language that is more Pauline, א* reads spirits of the "dead who have been justified" (τελείων δεδικαιωμένοις).

[59] Johnson points out that both occurrences of the term contain "an intimation of a life beyond mortality" (*Hebrews*, 332).

[60] Attridge explains: "The image of the souls or spirits of the departed righteous being in the presence of God is another common theme in apocalypses and other Jewish literature...The spirits of the perfected just properly stand in parallel with the church of the firstborn enrolled in heaven..." (*Hebrews*, 376). Lane notes how Jewish apocalyptic texts often depict the "godly dead" in God's presence (*Hebrews*, 2:470). The righteous spirits are the "faithful men and women who have already died" while the *ekklesia* refers to the "whole people of God, the eschatological assembly in its ultimate and complete state" (2:472). Moffatt suggests the phrase refers to "the departed who have in this life been δίκαιοι in the sense of 10:38f" (*Hebrews*, 218). Spicq explains that πνεύματα "est une désignation courante de l'âme des hommes séparée de leur corps, avant la résurrection" (*Hébreux*, 2:408).

bodies but in the dimension of the spirit."[61] This is not the place to resolve the differences, which are rooted in different understandings of theological anthropology. While one may challenge Johnson's understanding of πνεύμασι as an ontological category, he is right to include both the living and and the dead among "those who have been made perfect" (τετελειωμένων). The author of Hebrews insists that the hearers, unlike those under the Levitical system,[62] have "been made perfect" through Jesus.[63] Their having been made perfect is an objective reality brought about by Jesus's priestly service on their behalf. Nevertheless, their perfection mirrors Jesus's own perfection, which came through suffering (2:10; 5:8–9). In this regard, the hearers' perfection is less objective and more dynamic or progressive, especially considering the author's insistence that the hearers need to pursue perfection (or maturity) (see 5:13–6:1; 12:1–3). While the perfect participle (τετελειωμένων) can denote "those who have died," such an interpretation may obscure the importance of τελειόω and τέλος elsewhere in the epistle.[64]

The third thing to which the hearers have come is Jesus, named by apposition the mediator of the new covenant, an important aspect of his identity. Elsewhere in Hebrews, the author speaks of Jesus as the mediator of a better covenant (8:6) or a new covenant (9:15). Reference to the new covenant here recalls the central section of Hebrews (4:14–10:18) and the arguments made there regarding the nature of Jesus's priesthood, the comparison of its effects to the previous priesthood, and the nature of the new covenant. In effect, the second location of God's speech (Heb 12:22–24) becomes the site of covenant ratification. Just as Moses facilitated a covenant between God and the Israelites at Sinai-

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[61] Johnson, *Hebrews*, 332.

[62] Cf. Heb 7:19; 9:9; 10:1, which emphasize the old priesthood's inability to perfect the worshippers and grant them access to God.

[63] Similar conclusions made by Attridge (*Hebrews*, 376); Johnson (*Hebrews*, 332–33); Lane (*Hebrews*, 2:471). Moffatt explains that the δίκαιοι "had to await the sacrifice of Christ before they were 'perfected'" (*Hebrews*, 218).

[64] See David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the 'Epistle to the Hebrews'* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Horeb,[65] Mount Zion in Hebrews is the place where Jesus ratifies the new covenant.[66] As the mediator of a new covenant, Jesus enables the hearers' worship and ensures their safety in drawing near to God because he is the one who is able to save forever those who draw near to God through him (7:24–25).

The final thing to which the hearers have come is the "sprinkled blood" that speaks better than the blood of Abel. Elsewhere in Hebrews, blood accomplishes sanctification[67] and the sprinkled blood of Christ enables the hearers to worship God with purified hearts (see 10:22). The author of Hebrews insists that this sprinkled blood "speaks better" than that of Abel. It is possible to understand this comparison in three ways: as a reference to the atoning significance of an innocent person's death: Christ's blood "speaks better" because it results in eternal and complete remission of sin;[68] as a reference to the superiority of Christ's blood that "speaks" a blessing while Abel's "speaks" a curse.;[69] and, as reference to the priestly ministry of the Son, which excels the curse effected and justice demanded by Abel's blood; it speaks not only of innocent blood shed, but to the ongoing priestly service of the living Son, which grants to hearers' the ability to confidently enter into God's presence. Reference to Jesus's blood speaking would then recall the epistle's central conviction that God has spoken most effectively and fully through the Son (Heb 1:1–

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[65] Lane notes this, though he speaks negatively of Moses's fear at the first covenant ratification (*Hebrews*, 2:472).

[66] Johnson captures the significance of the image of Jesus nicely: "[Jesus] is a mediator (see 8:6; 9:15) of a covenant between God and humans that is both new (see 8:8; 9:15) and better (7:22; 8:6), because it is not temporary but eternal (13:20). His mediation is accomplished through his death, which is here, as earlier, expressed in terms of ritual "sprinkling" (*rhantismos*; see 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22) of his own blood (2:14; 9:13, 19, 22, 25; 10:4, 19, 29)" (*Hebrews*, 333).

[67] Under the first covenant, the sprinkled blood of goats and bulls purified the flesh of worshippers (9:13); the blood of Christ, under the new covenant, is even more effective, cleansing the conscience from dead works so that the hearers can worship God (9:14). Although it is not explicit, the comparison in Heb 9:13–14 implies the sprinkling of Christ's blood. In Heb 9:15–22, there are two references (9:19, 21) to the sprinkling of blood under the old covenant; once again, the action has a sanctifying force (9:22) and inaugurates the first covenant (9:18). The related expression "sprinkled water" occurs in Num 19:9, 13, 20, 21. The sprinkling of blood recalls Exod 24:8, in which sprinkled blood sealed the covenant (see further, Lane, 2:473).

[68] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 377.

[69] Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:473. Moffatt is similar, suggesting that Jesus's blood speaks of reconciliation with God while Abel's cries out for exclusion from God (*Hebrews*, 218–19)

4), particularly through his obedient suffering and death. Similar to the use of the figure of periphrasis in Heb 12:18–19a , the "blood that speaks" expresses much with few words.[70]

Once again, the perspective of *De Sublimitate* highlights important features of the shape of language in Heb 12:22–24. The nature of description in Heb 12:22–24 casts into deeper relief the rapid, chaotic presentation of images in 12:18–19a. Rather than single words, the author uses phrases to describe the second location of God's speech in verses 22–24; the language used allows the hearer to linger over each aspect of the description. The images found in these verses, like the lengthened words and phrases in which they are expressed, are *full* and *expansive*: the scene is full of life and solemnity as the expanded list of participants—innumerable angels, perfected righteous spirits, the *ekklesia* of the firstborn—join in worship together.

Though the description of the second location of God's speech is more evocative and open-ended than the description of the first location, the place to which the hearers have come is somehow mediated through these images. The reference to the city of God, the angels in festival, and the heavenly assembly are suggestive, but not precise. The suggestive, open-ended nature of the passage aligns with Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric. In his opening words about the nature of sublime rhetoric, Longinus offers a broad statement about "true sublime rhetoric" (ἀληθὲς ὕψος) that may illustrate the function of this evocative imagery. Sublime rhetoric, he insists, is more than just mere words spoken or heard in an instant. Rather, sublime rhetoric "outlasts the moment of utterance;" it gives the mind "food for thought;" it leaves an irresistible memory that is "stubborn and indelible" (*Subl.* 7.3). This open-ended nature of sublime rhetoric, this "food for thought," leads not to the closing of the mind—a selection of one option or another—

[70] Similarly, Johnson suggests that the blood of Jesus speaks better for at least three reasons: it is spoken more clearly; it is spoken more powerfully (i.e. to all humans); and, it speaks from and of a greater reality (*Hebrews*, 333).

but to its opening. As I will demonstrate more fully in the next chapter, one of the important functions of this second description is that it helps reorient the hearers to what really matters. The evocative and suggestive depiction of the hearers' heavenly origin and destination helps them "lift their eyes" and provides significant motivation to endure the physical and social hardships they are facing.

Heb 12:22–24 builds on the emotional tenor of 12:18–21. Just as the description of the first location is more open-ended, so is the emotional effect of Heb 12:22–24. The passage presents a myriad of angels in festive gathering before the eyes of the hearers. Though taken by many interpreters to signal the opposite of the fearful scene described earlier in 12:18–21,[71] the depiction of angelic gatherings in biblical and extra-biblical writings are rarely free from a sense of terror or danger.[72] In addition, both in Greek and Roman religion, religious festivals associated with the πανηγύρις were a mix of both revelry and reverence.[73] Even more significant, the myriads of angels here gather around God, "the judge of all" (12:23), adding to the description of the second location of God's speech a sense of awe.[74] Isaiah's response to the cherubim's praise of God, for example, is

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[71] Perhaps most clearly, see Lane: "The fervent joy in the gathering distinguishes the atmosphere of Zion from the terror that dispersed the Israelites at the foot of Sinai...Heavenly Jerusalem is a place of blessing, where the redeemed can join with the 'angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven' in celebratory worship of God" (*Hebrews*, 2:467)

[72] Myriads of angels are said to accompany God's presence at Sinai (Deut 33:2; Psa 68:17–18). Frequently, angels bring about destruction and punishment individuals and nations (see Exod 33:2; 2 Sam 24:16–17; 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chr. 21: 12, 15–16; Sir 48:21; 1 Macc 7:41; 2 Macc 15:22; Acts 12:23; Rev 16:2–4, 8, 10, 12, 17). In the Hebrew bible, though initially unrecognized, upon perceiving the presence of an angel the seer often prostrates him- or herself (Num 22:31; Judg 13:6, 20–21). Gideon's response is even stronger. He cries out for help from God after his encounter with an angel (Judg 6:22). The terrifying presence of angels is also present in the writings of the New Testament; see Luke 1:12; 2:9.

[73] Herodotus explains that the Greek's acquired the practice of "solemn assembly" (πανηγύρις) from the Egyptians (see *Hist.* 2.59–63). His description of various Egyptian assemblies presents a number of different emotions or experiences associated with them. While one assembly may rightly be characterized as joyous—the participants clap their hands and sound instruments (2.60), another assembly reaches its highpoint in communal lament (2.61). Some of these festivals are accompanied with sacrifice (2.60, 61). Several festivals occur in obscurity of night (2.62, 63). One festival involves men carrying wooden clubs and ends with the men fighting each other, even to the point of death (2.63). Walter Burkert, commenting on how religious festivals interrupted "ordinary" time, accentuates the different emotional experiences associated with religious festivals: "The contrast with normality may be expressed in mirth and joy, in adornment and beauty, or else in menace and terror." See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (trans. John Raffan; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985 [1977]), 99.

[74] See, e.g. the scene of God's judgment seat attended by myriads of angels in Dan 7:10. Similar depictions

one of terror ("Woe is me!"), not joy (Isa 6:5). Although the audience has confidence to approach God's throne (Heb 4:16), the danger and seriousness of doing so is not removed, nor is God less fearful as a judge.

The Response to be Avoided (Heb 12:25–27)

Like much of the epistle, Hebrews 12:18–29 concerns the proper response to God's speech: Heb 12:18–24 outlines the two locations of God's speech; Heb 12:25–29 traces two responses to God's speech and its effects. The imperative form of βλέπω in 12:25 resembles the turn to exhortation elsewhere in the epistle;[75] the use of asyndeton makes the transition more abrupt.[76]

The verb παραιτέομαι appears twice in 12:25. Whereas the use of the verb to describe the response of the terrified Israelites in 12:19 can be understood as a respectful request, the two uses in 12:25 denote an act of insurrection: "Do not reject (μὴ παραιτήσησθε) the one who is speaking."[77] The negative valence becomes even more apparent when the same verb appears again in parallel with ἀποστρέφω, a word that more clearly denotes turning away from or refusing.[78] The initial request of "those ones" for the cessation of God's speech (12:19) has turned into a rebellious rejection of God's speech.[79] The author warns the hearers about adopting a similar disposition toward God's speech.

The antecedent for the substantive participle in 12:25 (τὸν λαλοῦντα) is not entirely

of the angels and God's judgment appear in apocalyptic literature (e.g. 1 Eno 1:9; 40:1–10; 60:1–2; Rev 5:11–12; Rev 7:9–17; 20:12).

[75] See, e.g. Heb 3:12 where the author warns the hearers to, "Take care" against a heart that turns away from the living God.

[76] Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 219.

[77] The verb rarely appears with as strongly a negative connotation elsewhere in the Greek Bible (see 1 Tim 5:11 and possibly Tit 3:10; cf. BDAG, s.v. παραιτέομαι). The verb is used similarly, however, in other Hellenistic writings, including Philo (see Philo, *Det. Pot. Ins.* 38; LSJ, s.v. παραιτέομαι).

[78] See BDAG, s.v. ἀποστρέφω. In the New Testament, see Matt 5:42 (refuse); Acts 3:26 (turning away from wicked ways); 2 Tim 1:15 (turning away from the author); turning away from truth (2 Tim 4:4; Tit 1:14). Attridge notes the verb here "connotes a more complete 'repudiation,' especially of a religious tradition" (*Hebrews*, 380).

[79] See Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 219: the phrase describing those ones means "any obstinate rejection of what Moses laid down." Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:475: "It connotes a deliberate and culpable refusal to listen to the one speaking."

clear. The most immediate antecedent would be τὸ αἷμα that speaks better than the blood of Abel (12:24). It is more likely, however, that the antecedent refers either to God or to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant (12:24). Part of the decision rests, however, on how one understands the substantive participle τὸν χρηματίζοντα later in the verse. Some interpreters infer different speakers issuing the warnings from different locations: Moses warns from earth (ἐπὶ γῆς) while God warns from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανῶν). This interpretation is supported, at least in part, by the comparatively worse (πολὺ μᾶλλον) punishment for those who turn away from the one who warns from heaven. It is more likely, however, that the different locations imply two modes of revelation or moments in revelation history (cf. Heb 1:1–4), not a distinction between God's speech and that of Moses.[80] In other words, the contrast does not concern who speaks but the location of that speech. The same logic is at work in the contrast between the "voice" that shook the earth *then* and the one that is promised to shake the earth and the heavens "yet once more" (12:26–27). The distinction is not about who speaks, but where or when such speech occurs.

Whether from earth or from heaven, it is impossible to flee (ἐκφεύγω) from the demands of God's speech (12:25). While this was true for those who rejected God's warning from earth, it is even more so (πολύ μᾶλλον) for those who turn away from God's heavenly warning. The powerful, unavoidable nature of God's warning in 12:26 recalls responses to God's speech earlier in the epistle. In 2:1–4, the author compares the punishment accompanying the word spoken through angels (ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος, 2:1) with the punishment that comes with the message (cf. 1:4–14) that the hearers have just overheard (τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν). The author asks how "we" can flee (ἐκφευξόμεθα) should we neglect the salvation spoken through the Lord (λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου). Likewise, the

[80] E.g. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 380; Johnson, *Hebrews,* 334; Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:476; Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:410–11. Cf. Moffatt *Hebrews*, 220, who follows Chrysostom in understanding τὸν χρηματίζοντα to refer to Moses. For a discussion of this interpretation and others who espouse it, see Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:475–76.

author warns his hearers against receiving the good news with faithless hearing (4:2), which prevented the first hearers from entering into God's rest and will assuredly prevent the author's hearers from doing so as well (4:6–7, 11). The demands made by God's speech, and their essential unavoidability, is powerfully depicted in the author's description of the word of God as living and active in 4:12–13.

In Heb 12:26, the author once again draws a contrast between sensible manifestations of God's speech and more abstract ones. On one hand, God's voice shook the earth at Sinai (see Judg 5:4–5; cf. Exod 19:18 MT).[81] On the other hand, the author calls his hearers to consider a more intangible form of shaking—one that is promised to occur sometime in the future.[82] Regardless, the comparison emphasizes the sheer power of God's speech, which shakes the created order. The depiction of the second shaking intensifies the powerful nature of God's speech. God's promised speech will shake both the earth and heaven and lead to the absolute removal (μετάθεσις) of all that has been made; only that which cannot be shaken will remain. The depiction of God's speech recalls Longinus's analysis of Homer's *Theomachia*:

> You see, friend, how the earth is split to its foundations, hell itself laid bare, the whole universe sundered and turned upside down; and meanwhile everything, heaven and hell, mortal and immortal alike, shares in the conflict and danger of that battle. (*Subl.* 9.6)

Longinus notes this scene for its ability to powerfully represent the emotion of awe. The scene's all-encompassing nature connects with God's promised shaking. The image of the removal of all created things is as vivid and ominous as laying earth and hell bare and turning the universe upside down.

[81] Elsewhere in Israel's scriptures, the shaking of the earth accompanies God's presence, often in connection with God's wrath. See Judg 5:4; 2 Sam 22:8–9; Psa 67:9 LXX; 76:19 LXX; 113:7 LXX; Amos 1:14; Joel 2:10; 3:16; Nah 1:5; Hag 2:6; Isa 13:13; 24:18, 20; 29:5–6; Jer 10:22; 23:19; 28:29; 29:3. The theme continues in Second Temple compositions, many of which connect the shaking of the earth with the Day of the Lord. See 1 Eno 60.1; 4 Ezra 3.18; 6.13–16; 10.26; Sib. Or. 3.675; 2 Bar 32.1–2; 59.3.

[82] Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:479: "The writer found in the shaking of the earth at Sinai (v 26*a*) a proleptic event anticipating an eschatological shaking that will affect both heaven and earth (v 26*b*). The temporal contrast between "then" and "now" is extended to include the future as well." Johnson notes the witness to "promises yet to be fulfilled" (*Hebrews*, 334).

Through the sustained comparison of the two locations of God's speech, the author creates a simple, though compelling, view of the hearers' required response. The first hearers asked for the cessation of God's speech; they could not endure the things that were demanded of them. Although their experience was sensibly terrifying, the first hearers failed to respond adequately to God's speech. Those who hear God's speech from the second location hear God's speech in less physical but no less terrifying ways, as evidenced by 12:26–27. The negative response they must avoid is not simply requesting the cessation of God's speech. Rather, the author warns of a more active, seditious refusal to hear God's word. The response to be avoided is resisting and turning away from the one who warns from heaven. God's speech conveys God's piercing knowledge and radical demands on the hearers; it signals that the place where God speaks is a place of awe and danger; and, it emphasizes God's power, since God's speech shakes both earth and heaven.

The Appropriate Response (Heb 12:28–29)

In verse 28, the inferential conjunction διό signals a return to the hortatory tone, marked by the two cohortative subjunctives (ἔχωμεν, λατρεύωμεν) that follow. The participial phrase, βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες, serves as the partial basis for the switch in tone. The substantive (βασιλεία) and the adjective (ἀσάλευτος) do not occur frequently in Hebrews,[83] but they relate closely to several of the epistle's main themes. This "unshakeable kingdom" is similar to the coming world (ἡ οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα) in Heb 2:5, the city created by God in 11:10, the city of the living God in 12:22, and the lasting city (μένουσα πόλις) that the hearers seek in 13:14. It is not unlike the coming age (μέλλοντος

[83] Βασιλεία only occurs two other times in Hebrews (1:8; 11:33). In Heb 1:8, the word appears in a quotation from Psa 44:7, and sheds minimal light on the occurrence in Heb 12:28, insofar as it speaks of the Son's kingdom. Βασιλεία in Heb 11:33 refers not to the Son's kingdom or to the unshakable one, but to the kingdoms defeated by the faithful.

The adjective ἀσάλευτος occurs only twice in the NT, here and in Acts 27:41. Moffatt wonders if the "sudden reference to the primitive idea of βασιλεία" is due to the author's quotation of Hag 2 earlier in the passage (*Hebrews*, 222). Lane notes the tendency of some interpreters to understand the unshakable kingdom as an allusion to Dan 7:14, 18 LXX, which he finds doubtful. He suggests instead allusions to the Psalms that connect God's kingdom and God's reign (*Hebrews*, 2:484–86. Johnson notes the widespread connection between Βασιλεία and πόλις in antiquity (*Hebrews*, 336).

αἰῶνος) in 6:5, the eternal inheritance (τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας) in 9:15, and the promised rest in Heb 3–4. Grässer suggests that the phrase is a summary term (“zusammenfassender Begriff”) for heavenly blessings of salvation.[84]

In the immediate context, the kingdom is "unshakeable" in the sense that it endures the shaking of earth and heaven through God’s speech (12:26) and is numbered among the things that are not shaken (τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα, 12:27). This kingdom is also unshakeable in the sense that it is enduring and not subject to alteration. It evokes God's unchangeable (ἀμετάθετος) will revealed in God's promise to Abraham (6:17–18) and the perpetual (διηνεκής) nature of Jesus's priesthood (7:3), which is not subject to alternation as was the Levitical priesthood (7:11–19, 23–25). Unlike the kingdoms of the world that rise and fall in power and risk destruction, the "unshakable kingdom" endures; it is rooted in God's unalterable character and God's unchanging promises. It signals an established and steady reality that contrasts with the audience's tumultuous existence mentioned earlier in the epistle.[85]

This unshakable kingdom remains an object of promise. It awaits the "yet once more" of God's promised speech that will transform all that has been made. Its promised nature resembles the inheritance that Abraham set out to receive, even though he did not know where he was going (11:8). This promised kingdom is seen and welcomed from afar by the audience, not unlike the faithful who died waiting to receive the promises of God (11:13). Yet, the verbal form indicates that they *are receiving* this kingdom.[86] This promised kingdom—and the hearers proleptic participation in it—is an important motivating factor

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[84] Grässer, *Hebräer*, 3:337.

[85] Spicq captures this nicely: "Les chrétiens sont dès maintenant membres de ce royaume (cf. le participe présent). Quel privilège! Qual contraste avec les persécutions en ce monde!" (*Hébreux*, 2:412–13).

[86] Moffatt says this kingdom is "already present" and that the "result of the cosmic catastrophe will simply be to leave this unimpaired, to let it stand out in its supreme reality and permanence" (*Hebrews*, 222). Lane says the present tense participle "emphasizes that Christians are now only in the process of receiving this gift and that this process will continue into the future" (*Hebrews*, 2:484). Johnson emphasizes the present nature of the kingdom as well: "The author states conclusively that he and his hearers have been given such participation in what remains forever" (*Hebrews*, 336).

for the hearers in their present lives. The promised reality is reliable not only because of God's character, but also because of the work of Jesus. The hearers' access to this unshakeable kingdom, like the eternal inheritance, is guaranteed by Jesus's role as mediator of a new covenant (9:15).

Knowledge of this unshakable kingdom demands a particular response, indicated by the two cohortative subjunctives, ἔχωμεν and λατρεύωμεν.[87] There is some debate about the meaning of the first phrase, ἔχωμεν χάριν, in Heb 12:28. There are two main options. First, the phrase may reflect an idiomatic expression that means "be grateful" or "give thanks."[88] The majority of commentators favor this reading.[89] The phrase may also mean, "Let us maintain grace,"[90] though this reading has far fewer proponents among modern or ancient interpreters.[91] To better understand the phrase here, it is important to attend to how both words (ἔχω and χάρις) are used elsewhere in Hebrews.

The word χάρις occurs 7x in Hebrews.[92] "Grace" is closely linked to God in several instances—the "grace of God" allowed Jesus to taste death for everyone (2:9) and the hearers are encouraged to draw near to the "throne of grace" (4:16a). Grace, though, is also a quality that can be communicated or lost: drawing near to the throne of grace enables the

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[87] Textual witnesses suggest variant readings of both verbal forms, including a drift toward the indicative mood for each verb. Several witnesses read ἔχομεν χάριν: p[46*] ℵ K P 6 33 104 326 365 629 1505 1881 lat. The indicative form of λατρεύω occurs in ℵ (Ψ) 0243 0285[vid] 1739 1881 𝔐. A few minority witnesses have the aorist subjective (λατρεύσωμεν) instead of the present: p[46] bo.

[88] See 2 Macc 3:33: "While the high priest was making an atonement, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing, and they stood and said, 'Be very grateful (Πολλὰς...χάριτας ἔχε) to the high priest Onias, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life'" (NETS).

[89] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 382; Grässer, *Hebräer*, 3:337; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 327; Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:443, 486; Moffatt, *Hebrews*, 222; Weiss, *Hebräer*, 693.

[90] The use of ἔχω in a hortatory tone (i.e. cohortative subjunctive or imperative) is not without precedent in the LXX or in the New Testament. See Gen 38:23; Esth 3:11; Tob 5:21; 6:16; 10:6; Mark 9:50; Mark 11:22; Luke 14:18, 19; Rom 14:22; 1 Cor 7:2; Phil 2:29; Jas 1:4.

[91] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:413. Spicq admits that the majority of interpreters, ancient and modern, prefer the alternative. In favor of his reading, however, Spicq notes how the phrase connects with λατρεύω, the absence of an indirect object in the phrase, and the use of χάρις elsewhere in the epistle. Westcott leaves open the possibility of both readings. In favor of the second, less prominent reading, he points to a similar use ἔχειν χάριν in 3 John 4 as well as this understanding of the phrase in the Peshitta and some Latin Fathers. See Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (2d ed. London; New York: MacMillan and Co, 1892), 422.

[92] Heb 2:9; 4:16 *bis*; 10:29; 12:15, 28; 13:9, 25.

hearers to receive mercy and to find grace for a time of need (4:16b). Grace, not regulations regarding food, has the ability to strengthen the heart (13:9). Most importantly both because of its proximity to the verse in question and because of its relevance, Heb 12:15 indicates that the "grace of God" is something that can be forfeited.[93]

Second, although "grace" is not listed as one of the things that the audience "has" elsewhere in the epistle, it resembles many of things that are listed. The verb ἔχω occurs frequently in Hebrews[94] and appears in participial form (ἔχοντες) followed by objects in the accusative case to summarize or introduce sections of the epistle. In 4:14, for example, the author introduces the section on Jesus's high priesthood in this way: "Therefore, since we have (ἔχοντες) a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to the confession (κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας)" (my translation). A similar construction reminds the hearers that they have boldness to enter God's sanctuary and a great high priest (10:19–25). Given these passages, the hortatory force of ἔχωμεν suggests that grace (χάρις) is something that must be "held fast" as well.[95] Grace functions as a shorthand reference for the whole new situation created through Jesus's priestly actions on behalf of the hearers.[96] More than "gratitude," grace aligns the others things that aid or enable the hearers to worship: hope (3:14; 6:19), boldness (10:19–25), and the

[93] Of the list of imperatives found in Heb 12:14–16, one is the command to "Take care, lest someone withdraw from the grace of God." For the translation "withdraw from" for the phrase ὑστερέω ἀπό τινος, see LEH s.v. ὑστερέω. The example provided there is from Sir 7:34: "Do not withdraw from the mourners (μὴ ὑστέρει ἀπὸ κλαιόντων), but weep with those who weep" (my translation). Lane translates the phrase as "forfeits the grace of God" (*Hebrews*, 2:437), but explains in his notes that the phrase ὑστερεῖν ἀπό followed by the genitive "suggests the notion of being exclude from some benefit (i.e., the grace of God) through one's own fault" (2:439). I have tried to retain the active voice of the participle, although my translation is not substantively different than "be excluded from the grace of God" (see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 367; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 313).

[94] Heb 2:14; 3:3; 4:14, 15; 5:12 (*bis*), 14; 6:9, 13, 18, 19; 7:3, 5, 6, 24, 27; 8:1, :3; 9:1, 4, 8; 10:1, 2, 19, 34, 35, 36; 11:10, 15, 25; 12:1, 9, 28; 13:10, 14, 18

[95] Other things the hearers are commanded to "hold unto," include: boldness and the pride of hope (3:14); confession (4:14); encouragement to grab hope (6:18); hope (6:19); boldness (10:19); confession of hope (10:23)

[96] Similarly, Spicq: "Mais il est préférable de donner à χάρις le sens le plus large: «la grâce du Christianisme», c'est-à-dire la nouvelle alliance, le royaume stable, l'Église, le sang du Christ, la τελείωσις (v. 23), et c'est en étant fidèle à toutes ces exigences (δι' ἧς) que l'on fait de sa vie un culte qui plaît à Dieu" (*Hébreux*, 2:413).

"confession of hope" (4:14; 10:23).

The above analysis makes it more apparent why "grace" is the means through which (δι᾽ ἧς) the hearers worship in 12:28. The new situation brought about through Jesus's life, death, resurrection, and on-going priestly ministry enables worship of the hearers. Elsewhere in Hebrews, worship (λατρεύω) is closely connected with Jesus's priestly work, often as a contrast to worship under the Levitical priesthood. The author describes those who worship in a sanctuary that is a "sketch and shadow" of the heavenly sanctuary (8:5). Gifts and sacrifices made under the Levitical priesthood are not able to purify the conscience of the one who worships (τὸν λατρεύοντα) under the Levitical priesthood (9:9; cf. 10:2). In contrast, the blood of Christ can purify the conscience, enabling one to turn from dead works and worship the living God (9:14). The verb λατρεύω denotes the distinctive way in which the hearers approach God through the sacrifice of Christ, which stands in contrast to the inadequacy of former sacrificial actions.[97]

Grace also enables the hearers to worship God in an acceptable manner (εὐαρέστως).[98] Based on the use of the related verb (εὐαρεστέω) in Hebrews, the verbal form, εὐαρεστέω, relates to this "acceptable" form of worship. In Heb 11:5, Enoch is said to be pleasing to God which Heb 11:6 connects to faith. Later, the author equates both good work and generosity (εὐποιΐα καὶ κοινωνία) as sacrifices pleasing to God (13:16).[99] Enabled by grace, the hearers are exhorted to keep worshipping God in an acceptable manner, which manifests itself in a fidelity to God (faith) and solidarity with the assembly (good

[97] See similar sentiments in Lane, *Hebrews*, 2:486. Attridge explains that in the context of worship the "unshakable kingdom is present" (*Hebrews*, 383).

[98] The adverb εὐαρέστως appears only here within the Greek Bible. The related adjective, εὐάρεστος, occurs twice in the LXX and 9x in the New Testament. The adjective generally refers to something that is "pleasing" or "acceptable," especially in relationship to civic generosity (see BDAG, s.v. εὐάρεστος). In the Greek Bible, the adjective often describes actions or attitudes that are pleasing to God (see Wisd 4:10; 9:10; Rom 12:1–2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20; Heb 13:21). The major exception to the general tendency to identify God as the one who is pleased occurs in Tit 2:9, where the adjective refers to slaves rendering satisfaction to there masters. Attestation of the adverbial form is late, relatively rare, and for the most part restricted to Christian authors. Through the fourth century it occurs only in Christian literature with a few exceptions: see Philo, *Q.G.* 1. frg. 63, line 1; Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.12. 21; Porphyry, *Abstin.* 2.1.

[99] A similar spiritualization of sacrifice, using the root εὐαρεστ-, occurs in Rom 12:1 and Phil 4:18.

work and generosity). The visible act of worship and solidarity display the hearers commitment or orientation to invisible realities like God's presence and the unshakeable kingdom.

The two nouns following the preposition μετά add further details about this acceptable form of worship. First, acceptable worship is performed with "reverent awe" (ἡ εὐλάβεια).[100] Though used generally to denote caution or discretion,[101] the noun frequently refers to reverence or piety before the gods.[102] The only other occurrence of εὐλάβεια within the New Testament also occurs in Hebrews. In Heb 5:7, the noun refers to Jesus's response to God in the "days of his flesh." The author recalls how Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who is able to save him from death, adding that Jesus was heard (εἰσακουθείς) because of reverence (ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας). Jesus's reverence is, then, related to his response of prayer and trust in God's ability to save him.[103] In this way, the response of Jesus "in the days of his flesh" provides the pattern of response for the hearers. Like Jesus, they are to maintain their bold confidence in approaching the throne of grace (10:35), to entrust themselves to God who can save them from death, and to view their own suffering as productive of obedience and indicative of their identity as God's children (12:4–11; cf. 5:8). The audience's worship must be characterized by εὐλάβεια, a response not only of reverent awe but also radical trust in God's saving power.

The second noun (δέος) is another New Testament *hapax legomenon*. The noun occurs 5x in the LXX, exclusively in 2 Maccabees where it often has a negative connotation.

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[100] BDAG, s.v. εὐλάβεια.

[101] LSJ, s.v. εὐλάβεια.

[102] Diodorus Siculus recounts Demonsthenes's acquiescence to a three-day delay before returning to Athens out of respect or reverence for the gods (διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐλάβειαν) (*Hist*. 13.12.6). Plutarch recounts how Numa's successor, Tullus Hostilius, mocked Numa's reverence (τὴν περὶ τὸ θεῖον εὐλάβειαν) (*Num*. 22.7).

[103] See Harold W. Attridge, "'Heard Because of His Reverence' (Heb 5:7)," *JBL* (1979): 90–93. Attridge has argued convincingly that the most appropriate context for understanding Heb 5:7 is Philo's description of the prayers of Abraham and Moses in *Her*. 1–29. He concludes: "Jesus, like Abraham, prayed with a loud shout, and like Moses, manifested genuine emotion. The boldness in all their prayers, however, was tempered by a humble recognition of divine sovereignty, a 'religious awe' or 'reverence' that guaranteed that the prayers would be heard" (93).

It occurs in parallel with "bodily trembling" (ὁ φρικασμὸς σώματος, 2 Macc 3:17), confusion (ἡ ταραχή, 2 Macc 3:30; 13:16), fear (ὁ φόβος, 2 Macc 12:22), and trembling (ὁ τρόμος, 2 Macc 15:23). This evaluation is also found in many other Greek authors.[104] Philo, retains this negative connotation, but he also uses the word in a way that suggests it also denotes an appropriate response to God.[105] The appearance of the word here fits the context. Since the audience's approach to God is no less awesome than the tangible manifestations of God's speaking presence at Sinai/Horeb,[106] their worship must be characterized by both εὐλάβεια and δέος.[107]

The basis for this "acceptable worship" is indicated by the γάρ in Heb 12:29: "For indeed our God is a consuming fire." The image of fire is a trope in biblical and post-biblical literature signifying God and God's presence.[108] In Exodus, the image of fire signifies God's guiding presence, first in the burning bush (Exod 3:2) then in the pillar of fire that guides the Israelites (13:21–22),[109] and finally in God's presence on Mount Sinai (19:18; 24:17; see similarly, Deut 4:15, 33, 36; 5:22–26). In Deut 5:4, God's speech from the midst of fire is equated with a "face-to-face" encounter with God. While fire often signifies God's presence, it also indicates the dangers associated with God's presence[110] and God's wrath.[111] The verb καταναλίσκω appears only here in the New Testament, but is used

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[104] See LSJ, s.v. δέος.

[105] See Philo, *Her.* 1.3; 6.23; *Plant.* 1.3. For references outlining the general use of the word, particularly in reference to warfare, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 383 n81.

[106] At this point, Lane's earlier analysis of the "favorable judgment" of Christians by God and their joyous, confident approach to God falters. He cites approvingly Andriessen's statement that εὐλάβεια signifies "the fear that is appropriate 'before an imminent peril, namely, before the judgment of God'" (*Hebrews*, 2:487). See P. Andriessen, "Angoisse de la Mort dans l'Épitre aux Hébreux," *NRTh* (1974): 284.

[107] Attridge translates the two terms as a hendiadys, "reverent fear" (*Hebrews*, 383).

[108] See Deut 10:4; 18:10; see also Exod 24:17. Fire as a signal of God's presence appears elsewhere in Israel's scriptures. This frequently appears in association with the cult and whole burnt offerings in particular (1 King 18:36–38; 1 Chr 21:26; 2 Chr 7:1; 2 Macc 2:10). The fire of God's presence also denotes God's protection (Psa 45:10; 49:3; 96:3; Isa 43:2).

[109] The fire at night occurs frequently elsewhere in Israel's scriptures: Num 9:15–16; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Neh 9:12; Psa 77:14; 104:39; Isa 4:5;

[110] See Mic 1:4; Ezek 1:4, 17, 27; Dan 7:9–10.

[111] Gen 19:24; Exod 9:23; Num 11:1–3; 16:35, 46; 26:10; 2 Sam 22:9; 2 Kings 1:10, 12, 14; 2:11; 6:17; 3 Macc 2:5; Psa 17:9, 13; 20:10; 77:21; 78:5; 82:15; 88:47; 104:39; 105:18; Wis 16:16; Sir 45:19; Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5; 5:16; Joel 2:3; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Zech 9:4; Isa 5:24; 9:18–19; 10:16–17; 29:6; 30:27, 33; 47:14; 65:5; 66:15–16; Jer 4:4,

frequently in the Septuagint to describe God as a consuming fire (πῦρ καταναλίσκον).[112] In Deut 4:24, God is identified as a "consuming fire, a jealous God" (see also 5:25; 9:3). God's consuming fire devours other nations (Deut 7:22; 9:3), the whole burnt offerings (1 Chr 21:26), the impious and ungodly (Wis 16:16; Sir 45:19), and even the earth as a whole (Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Zech 9:4).

Heb 12:18–29 ends with reference to God as consuming fire—an image suggesting God's dangerous and powerful presence—in order to motivate the audience to respond appropriately to God through worship and reverence.[113] Far from a scene scoured of anything that might produce fear, Heb 12:29 represents a life lived in light of the awesome prospect of God's consuming fire. The hearers have not come to tangible flames, as the first hearers had. Instead, the author insists that they've drawn near to the very presence of God whose voice can shake both earth and heaven and whose fiery presence can purify and purge. The image of God as a consuming fire may qualify as a "bold metaphor" according to the evaluation of Longinus (see *Subl.* 32). Of course, the image is traditional and originates in the Hebrew Bible. Still, it would have been easy to weaken the force of the metaphor, turning it into a simile: God is *like* a consuming fire. Given the author's freedom in reconfiguring earlier traditions elsewhere in the passage, it is plausible that he could have added ὡς to soften the metaphorical expression in Deut 4:24.[114]

The metaphor is all the more bold when one considers the earlier negation of fire in Heb 12:18. Saying that God *is* a consuming fire, though, succeeds in large part because of the emotional tenor of the passage. The metaphor conveys the danger of entering into God's presence, which has been mediated in part through the text, and the fact that by nature God cannot be controlled or tethered. Whatever else "consuming" might mean, it

26; 15:14; 21:12; Lam 2:3–4; 4:11; Ezek 15:6–7; 19:12; 21:31; 22:20–21; 22:31; 23:35; 28:18; 30:8, 14, 16; 36:5

[112] The verb καταναλίσκω occurs 18x in the LXX.

[113] Lane: "The expression καὶ γάρ, 'for,' indicates that it is God's essential character that provides the reason for fear and awe that are appropriate to his [sic] worship" (*Hebrews*, 2:487).

[114] Longinus even permits the addition of phrases that harness bold metaphors (*Subl.* 32.3).

certainly denotes God's active presence and purposes, so effectively captured by the epistle's favorite description for God: *living.*[115]

From beginning to end, then, Hebrews 12:18–29 is marked by an emphasis on the danger and solemnity of God's presence and God's powerful speech. Its imagery and style fill the verses with a sense of awe. The vivid imagery throughout draws the audience into the scenes described. The scenery, characters, and actions all add to the emotional tenor of the passage. In a significant way, the passage itself generates the dispositions required for rightly worshipping God, namely with awe and reverence (12:28). With the depiction of God as a consuming fire, the final verse in this passage simply confirms and accentuates the awe-filled character of Heb 12:18–29.

Further Glimpses of Sublime Rhetoric

Imagination, Imitation, and the Idea of God's Speech

Many features of Hebrews 12:18–29 suggest its affinity to the first source of sublime rhetoric, which Longinus calls "full-blooded ideas" (*Subl.* 8.1). As discussed in the previous chapter, Longinus explains that there are three ways to produce these ideas—the subject matter or idea itself, imitation of great authors from old, and imagination (see *Subl.* 15.12). Hebrews 12:18–29 evinces aspects of each of these. In the analysis above, I have called attention to those places in the passage that draw on the hearers' imagination and how the form of language used draws the hearers into the scenes described.

The author's use of imitation, noted briefly in the opening of this chapter, is also consonant with Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric. By adopting and modifying traditions associated with Sinai and Horeb, Hebrews 12:18–21 can be understood as an instance of imitation. As noted above, the author conflates the two traditions, providing a complete (and completely awe-inspiring) picture of God's powerful speech, imitating the

[115] For the phrase "living God" in Hebrews, see Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22.

idea of God's powerful speech. More than simply copying words from the two accounts, however, the conflation of the two traditions, combined with the reconfiguration of Moses's fear, amplify the striking and dangerous nature of encounters with God witnessed in Israel's scripture. Russell, commenting on Longinus's understanding of imitation, says it consists of "being steeped in an author and reproducing his spirit."[116] One important feature of Heb 12:18–29 is how it reproduces the "spirit" of traditions found in Israel's scriptures, not only in the description of the first location of God's speech, but also in reference to the two shakings that emerge from God's speech and the image of God as consuming fire.

The passage's thoroughgoing interest in the nature and power of God's speech resembles Longinus's notion of a "full-blooded" idea as well. The two locations and the two shakings, despite the differences noted above, focus attention on God's speech. Longinus connects God's speech with full-blooded ideas in his allusion to the creation narrative in Genesis. Moses, he says, has "formed a worthy conception of divine power" in the creation account (*Subl.* 9.9). It is not insignificant that Moses's conception of divine power and

[116] Russell, *'Longinus'*, 112. Imitation does not require strict adherence to the earlier source, but it pertains more to capturing an idea, image, or turn of phrase characterized by one of the great authors of old.

That the writings of Moses would be regarded as worthy of imitation like the eminent Greek authors is evidenced by Jewish and later Christian apologetic literature. Moses is seen as the archetype for later philosophers and poets (see Philo, *Opif.* 8, 128). See also Aristobulus, Fr. 2 *apud* Eusebius, *P.E.* 8.9.38–8.10.17; Fr. 3 *apud* Eusebius, *P.E.* 13.12.1–2; Fr. 4 *apud* Eusebius, *P.E.* 13.13.3–8. See similarly Artapanus, Fr. 3 *apud* Eusebius, *P.E.* 9.27.4; Eupolemus, Fr. 1 *apud* Eusebius, *P.E.* 9.26.1. For an overview of the intersection of Judaism and Hellenism in these authors, see Carl R. Holladay, "Hellenism in the Fragmentary Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Resonance and Resistance," in *Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism* (ed. James L. Kugel; JSJSup 74; Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002) 65–91.

In addition, the phenomenon of "rewritten Bible" supports the view that the Torah was an object worthy of imitation. For a survey of attempts to rewrite the Sinai account, see Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (JSJSup 77; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003). For the disputed generic category of "rewritten Bible," see Moshe J. Bernstein, "'Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived its Usefulness?," *Textus* (2005): 169–196; George J. Brooke, "The Rewritten Law, Prophets, and Psalms," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judean Desert Discoveries* (ed. Edward D. Herbert and Emanuel Tov; London: Oak Knoll, 2002) 31–40; Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon–Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism?," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. Anthony Hilhorst *et al.*; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007) 285–306; Michael Segal, "Between Bible and Rewritten Bible," in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. Matthias Henze; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2004) 10–28; Molly M. Zahn, "Talking about Rewritten Texts: Some Reflections on Terminology," in *Changes in Scripture: Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period* (ed. Hanne von Weissenberg *et al.*; Berling: De Gruyter, 2011) 93–119

Longinus's appreciation for it relate to the effective power of God's speech: "'God said,' what? '"Let there be light," and there was light. "Let there be earth," and there was earth'" (*Subl.* 9.9). For Longinus, the creation account rightly captures the idea of God's effective and powerful speech. Just as Longinus commends the power of God's speech in creation, Heb 12:25–27 reflects a similar notion about God's powerful speech; the only difference is that God's speech in Hebrews results in the *removal* of all created things, not their manifestation. In both cases, though, the nature and structures of existence are changed through God's speech.

Moving the Hearers: Connecting the Earthly and the Ideal

There is one more aspect of Longinus's conception of sublime rhetoric that relates to Heb 12:18–29, but in a more indirect way. As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, Longinus describes sublime rhetoric and its effects with religious overtones, although he rarely discusses explicitly religious topics or texts. Longinus's comparison of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* demonstrates some of the religious aspects of sublime rhetoric. Though both writings demonstrate Homer's brilliance, the intensity of the *Iliad* impresses Longinus. The superiority of the *Iliad* is found in its rapid succession of "moving incidents" and the density of its imagery drawn from "real life" (ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας) (9.13). Imagery need not be fantastic to be effective as sublime rhetoric. Rather, Longinus attributes some of the more energetic effects of sublime rhetoric to topics or examples that are far from extraordinary. Deliberations about warfare, political posturing on behalf of one leader or another, and even descriptions of human infatuation all activate the intended effects of sublime rhetoric. Speeches made on topics of earthly significance somehow move the audience beyond persuasion and allow them to perceive knowledge or a reality beyond them. Though not clearly delineated in Longinus's discussion of sublime rhetoric, the mundane somehow conveys and gives access to the ideal.

A similar connection between the mundane and the ideal appears in Heb 12:18–29. The contrast between the earthly and the heavenly, the visible and the invisible is not absolute. Instead, the passage presents heavenly realities that are met through the earthly; the invisible is made perceptible through the visible. Mount Zion is not simply a mythical mountain in Israel's religious past; it is also a tangible, visible reality that long served as the destination for pilgrims and the location of Israel's sacred temple. This tangible, earthly location communicates the invisible heavenly Jerusalem.

The reference to the "myriad of angels in festive gathering" evidences a blending of the sensible and the intangible as well. While the hearers' imagination is free to ponder the shape and characteristics of the angelic entourage, it is chastened by their familiarity with earthly festive gatherings. Whether Jewish annual festivals or celebrations associated with pan-Hellenic games, the tangibility of festive gatherings enables the hearers to imagine the mix of joy and solemnity, revelry and reverence of the heavenly one. A similar logic is at work with regard to the "first born." The ambiguous identity of the first born is grounded by the more commonplace notions of the "assembly" and "enrollment." These sensible realities are mapped onto heavenly realities in order to identify the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. The author's emotional and evocative descriptions depend on the common to convey the intangible.

In Heb 12:23–24, the language becomes more explicitly religious, but it too derives from the interdependence of the earthly and the heavenly. The second location is filled with items of religious significance: God the judge, the spirits of the righteous who have been perfected, the mediator of a new covenant, sprinkled blood. The alternation of items blends the tangible and intangible. God's presence intersects with human spirits now made perfect. Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, ratifies the covenant in heaven, but that covenant is "spoken" by his blood shed on earth. Even the witness of Christ's blood is

compared not with a heavenly reality, like the witness of the ministering spirits in chapter one. Rather, the "voice" of Christ's blood is superior to that of Abel, an image of human blood shed on earth.

In the end, this linking of heavenly and earthly, of communicating the incommunicable through the sensible, refocuses attention on the location to which the hearers have come. After all, they have come to something. They have come to the assembly that some have begun to neglect (10:25). They have come to the place where they hear the word of God through the word of their leaders (13:7). They have come to the place where God speaks. As the commonplace image of a festive gathering links and blends with the fantastic gathering of a myriad of angels, so their assembly somehow links and blends with the assembly in heaven. The author provides them with a powerful glimpse of the civic life of the city that they are seeking (13:14). And yet, indirectly but no less powerfully, they are given access to that city. Along with the festive fathering, they join the voices of angels as they offer a sacrifice of praise (13:15). The empirical gathering provides access to and perception of the intangible. The very tangibility of their assembly connects them to the intangibility of their hoped-for city.

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by drawing on an insight made by Martha Nussbaum on the relationship between what she calls “conception and expression”:

> Conception and form are bound together; finding and shaping the words is a matter of finding the appropriate and, so to speak, the honorable, fit between conception and expression. If the writing is well done, a paraphrase in a very different form and style will not, in general, express the same conception...form and style are not incidental features. A view of life is told. The telling itself—the selection of genre, formal structures, sentences, vocabulary, of the whole manner of addressing the reader's sense of life—all of this expresses a sense of life and value, a sense of what matters and what does not, of what learning and communicating are, of life's relations and connections. Life is never simply *presented* by a text; it is always *represented* as something.[117]

[117] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York; Oxford: Oxford

While other voices both modern and ancient may have provided a similar appreciation for the link between "conception and form" or "conception and expression," it was *De Sublimitate*'s distinctive views on rhetoric—what I have been calling sublime rhetoric—that proved most expedient for highlighting this link.

Adopting Longinus's treatise *De Sublimitate* has provided a renewed appreciation for the "whole manner" in which Heb 12:18–29 addresses the hearers' "sense of life." Its sentence construction and word choice, imagery and emotion, all play a central role in representing its "sense of life and value." A major concern of this chapter has been to trace the "fit" between "conception and expression." By ignoring or devaluing the features of expression in Heb 12:18–29, however, many interpreters reduce this passage to a paraphrased version of it. The old covenant was an event of terror; the new covenant one of joy. The first location emphasizes God's inaccessibility and distance; the second location signals access and God's real presence. Sinai/Horeb, as a cipher for earthly existence, emphasizes the superiority of the heavenly Zion. As the analysis above has made clear, these paraphrases do not fully capture the full conception of the passage or how it might address the hearers' "sense of life." Simple distinctions based on paraphrase—between fear and joy, inaccessibility and access—unravel when more attention is given to the shape of expression in the passage.

This chapter has explored the features of Heb 12:18–29 "form" or "expression" that resemble those of sublime rhetoric as presented in *De Sublimitate*. For this project, however, it is not enough to consider the features of style alone, although these aspects of the passage are significant in their own right. Rather, the next chapter considers how these formal features convey and create the "form of life" represented by the passage and how such representation helps the audience perceive of their empirical gathering in different

University Press, 1990), 5.

ways.

Chapter Five:
Hebrews 12:18–29 and the Effects of Sublime Rhetoric

My analysis of *De Sublimitate* in chapter two and the subsequent comparison of the treatise with other accounts of style and descriptions of the potential of language from antiquity in chapter three drew attention to the treatise's distinctive views. In particular, I have returned to the treatise's recurring contrast between persuasion—the theoretical center and stated goal of ancient rhetorical handbooks—and what I've termeed sublime rhetoric. While sublime rhetoric interacts and intersects with persuasive rhetoric, it points to another capacity o register of language not typically discussed in ancient rhetorical theories. As discussed in chapter two, sublime rhetoric transcends or disables deliberation; it enslaves and entrances.

What I hope to show in this chapter is how Longinus's treatise helps to account for the role of Heb 12:18–29 in moving the hearers "from statsis" (ἔκστασις). As the author of Hebrews presents them, the hearers need a form of rhetoric that amazes and stirs them to endure hardship and maintain their commitment to gathering together. In what follows, I explore two ways in which sublime rhetoric—and the rhetoric of Heb 12:18–29—moves the hearers. First, I consider how sublime rhetoric moves the hearers by *dislocating* them. Sublime rhetoric moves the hearers into the scenes depicted by presenting them vividly before the eyes of the hearers; it creates a world for the hearers to inhabit. The epistle to the Hebrews moves the hearers into the place where God speaks. Hebrews 12:18–29, particularly through its relationship with Heb 13:1–17, reimagines the community's gathering as the site of God's speech.

In addition to moving the hearers to inhabit the world mediated by the text, sublime rhetoric moves by *stirring* the hearers. Perhaps one of the most striking features of *De Sublimitate* is this view of literature's capacity. Drawing on metaphors related to magic

and religion, warfare and slavery, Longinus shows how sublime rhetoric masters and overwhelms. It captivates and enthralls. These rousing effects of sublime rhetoric have an important function according to Longinus. They "lift the eyes" of the hearers, refocusing their attention on what really matters and stimulating them hold fast. I suggest that Hebrews 12:18–29 has a similar function. It rouses the hearers with the idea of drawing near to God's speaking presence. It too redirects the attention of the hearers to what really matters and propels them to hold fast to the place where God speaks. Both aspects of the "moving" rhetoric in Heb 12:18–2 are interrelated, then.

Moving the Hearers to the Place Where God Speaks

In the conclusion to the previous chapter, I drew on Martha Nussbaum's work to suggest that greater attention to the stylistic shape of Heb 12:18–29 excels paraphrased versions of interpretation, which tend to overemphasize the differences between Heb 12 and 13. So different is the content of Heb 12 from that of Heb 13 that some insist that the final chapter of Hebrews is not actually a part of the original epistle.[1] In fact, Spicq, by no means inattentive to the details of the Greek text, concludes that Heb 12:29 is the true conclusion of the letter.[2] It is, instead, a chapter of composite nature, including a Pauline-sounding postscript that has been added to Hebrews to make it seem more Pauline (and thus earn it a place in the New Testament canon).[3] The contents of Heb 13, especially the ethical exhortation and the personal greetings, are viewed as alien to the "original" composition.[4] It seems that Heb 13, if it actually belongs to the original epistle at all, adds little to the other twelve chapters and has little connection to what immediately precedes.

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[1] See the concise summary of the unique features of Heb 13 that make it suspect in Filson, *Yesterday*, 13–14. Filson provides as well an accessibly summary of twentieth-century challenges to the authenticity of Heb 13 (15–16).

[2] Spicq, *Hébreux*, 2:412.

[3] See Buchanan, *Hebrews*, 267–68.

[4] Notwithstanding the question of form and content, this view suffers from the simple fact that the exhortation of Heb 13 begins not in the first verse of that chapter, but actually in the final verses of Heb 12. If the hortatory tone of Heb 13 makes its authenticity suspect, one must call into question the turn in tone in Heb 12:28–29 as well. Filson argues for the integrity of chapter 13, showing how its structure resembles the closing of other New Testament letters (Filson, *Yesterday*, 22–24).

However, I argue that there is actually a vital connection between the two chapters. The rigid break made by some scholars between Heb 12 and 13 results from a misreading of Heb 12:18–29 that undervalues its distinctive style and rhetorical function, as I mentioned at the close of chapter four. Hebrews 12:18–29 represents a "view of life" (to use Nussbaum's phrase) *marked* by God's speech. The language and imagery of Heb 12:18–29 bring the hearers into the place where God speaks. But, the form of life represented by Heb 12:18–29 also *marks* the location of God's speech. It locates God's powerful, piercing word among those gathered. The moving rhetoric of Heb 12:18–29 is ultimately bound up with the place to which the hearers have come. On one hand, the passage insists that they have come to the place where they hear and respond to God's powerful speech. On the other hand, they have come to the place where they render worship in awe and reverence with others who respond appropriately to God's speech. Attention to these two dimensions of the "place" of Heb 12:18–29—as the location of God's speech *and* as the location of the gathered community—make the transition between Heb 12 and 13 less jarring.

Dislocating the Hearer

De Sublimitate provides a framework for potentially understanding *how* Heb 12:18–29 moves the hearers to inhabit the location of God's speech. Longinus connects the ability of sublime rhetoric to move the hearers with the imagination (*Subl.* 15), but also with other intended effects of sublime rhetoric.[5] Yun Lee Too[6] describes this effect of sublime rhetoric as dislocation:

> But where [Longinus] is concerned, the sublime seeks furthermore to move the reading subject, both in the sense of persuading him or her but also in the sense of transporting this individual to an entirely different ‘place’, as literally and metaphorically understood. As we shall see, the sublime assumes a parallel between linguistic dislocation and cultural dislocation and reinstitution.[7]

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[5] See, e.g., *Subl.* 7.2, 3; 15.4; 29.1; 33.2; 33.5; 36.1; 43.3, 5. See discussion in de Jonge, "Dionysius and Longinus," 266.

[6] See Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 187–217.

[7] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 195. This quotation illustrates some of the ways in which Too's view

Too speaks of sublime rhetoric "transporting" an individual to an "entirely different place." Both the notion of transport and Too's understanding of "place" deserve further comment as both inform my understanding of the function of Heb 12:18–29.

Too uses a fairly exhaustive set of words and phrases to explore the functions of sublime rhetoric. Sublime rhetoric derives from a text's "literary movement" that is "mobile" in nature. It is "spatialized and moved language," that displaces and uplifts, transports and re-situates.[8] Too insists, as the quotation above indicates, that sublime rhetoric entails both linguistic dislocation and cultural dislocation. While the first relates to the flexibility and mobility of language (e.g., the movement of words and meaning in a metaphor), cultural dislocation distances the hearers from their immediate life setting. In the case of *De Sublimitate*, sublime rhetoric transports the hearer from a stifling cultural context. Sublime rhetoric is not just about dislocation, however. Rather, Too's understanding of sublime rhetoric emphasizes that its intended effects, though transient, are ultimately transformational. While moving the hearers out of their immediate situation, sublime rhetoric ultimately results in their reinstitution.

Too grounds her understanding of dislocation in ἔκστασις (see *Subl.* 1:4). Sublime

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differs from my own. First, most obviously, she speaks of "the sublime" rather "sublime rhetoric" as I have throughout this dissertation. Too is more flexible in her designations of what I have been calling sublime rhetoric. She speaks of "sublime language" (189) and the "rhetoric of the sublime" (201, 213). Despite the different terminology, there is little difference as it relates to the effects of sublime rhetoric. Second, Too links what I have been calling sublime rhetoric more closely with persuasion than I have in this dissertation. Even so, the understanding of persuasion that she espouses in her discussion of *De Sublimitate* does, I think, reflect the distinctive perspective of Longinus, highlighted earlier in this dissertation. Third, and finally, she speaks consistently about the "reading subject" in *De Sublimitate* and the effect of sublime rhetoric on him or her. In my analysis, I have referred to the audience or to the hearers. While Too is correct to some extent—the treatise does, after all, take an interest not only in the experience of sublime rhetoric second-hand, but also aims to provide practical advice for creating sublime rhetoric, her insistence upon a "reading subject" perhaps reflects too rigid a distinction between readers and hearers. See, e.g. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity." Johnson highlights the differences between reading in antiquity and modern notions of reading, particularly in terms of technology, cognition, and aesthetics.

[8] She notes how both Varro (see *De Lingua Latina* 6.56) and Quintilian (see *Instit.* 1.5.11; 3.5.2; 4.2.5, 33, 49, 53–55, 62, 66ff.; 8.2.1–3; 9.4.60) view language as one "of artificed placement, of orientation, and of movement" (Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 191). In part, this view of language emerges from ancient distinctions between verbal representation and plastic art: language is inherently mobile and active while plastic art is static and unmoving (see further Alcidamus, *On the Sophists*, 27; Isocrates, *Evag.* 75; Apuleius, *Apol.* 14). In these ancient discussions, figures of speech—metaphor in particular—insist upon the "spatialization and dislocation of language" (193).

rhetoric, she suggests, moves the hearer from (*ek*) one position or place (*stasis*) to another. This movement has both spatial and temporal dynamics. The imagination activates the spatial dynamics as it creates a "textual journey" that augments the senses and gives sight to hearing.[9] Sublime rhetoric can also move across temporal frames. Sublime rhetoric "envisages a much more fundamental recovery of the past and a more radical transport of the reading subject from his or her present situation."[10] Such transport enables the hearers to "transcend [their] current temporal context."[11] For example, figures can facilitate these temporal dynamics. Apostrophe lifts the hearers out of their current situation.[12] The change of person locates the hearer in another time and place.[13] The change in verb tense leads to a new perception of how the audience understands their temporal location.[14]

The Place Where God Speaks

Hebrews 12:18–29 is held together by a thoroughgoing interest in God's speech. As my previous chapter indicates, these verses move the hearers to inhabit the place where God speaks. Hebrews 12:18–21 recreates the awesome phenomena of God's speech at Sinai/Horeb, drawing the hearers into the terrifying nature of the scene. So powerful was the sight that even Moses trembled with fear (12:21). The second location of God's speech (12:22–24) maps commonplace images and ideas, derived from civic and political life, onto heavenly realities. The choice of words and their arrangement create space for the hearer to linger from one locale to the next. Hebrews 12:25 focuses on the proper response of the the hearers to God's speech. The author warns of the pitfalls that come through rejecting God. Hebrews 12:26–27 create the image of a world utterly shaken by God's powerful voice so that only those things unshaken can remain. Next, the text includes the hearers in the

[9] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 200.
[10] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 210.
[11]Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 214.
[12] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 198.
[13] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 199.
[14] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 201.

"unshakable kingdom," which they are now receiving and which serves as the basis of their reverent response. The passage concludes by placing the hearers again in space marked by God's awesome presence with the reminder that God is a "consuming fire" (12:29).

In short, Heb 12:18–29 moves the hearers to inhabit a world of God's powerful, piercing, and awesome speech. This passage leads the hearers to consider most clearly the place to which they have come as the location of God's speech. Its "view of life"—crafted through its stirring idea of God's speech, vivid imagery, evocation of awe, and powerful diction—is the basis of the exhortations that precede and follow it. The tendency of the epistle to move the hearers into the place of God's speech appears in a concentrated and climactic form in Heb 12:18–29. Other passages in Hebrews demonstrate a similar tendency to move the hearers into the place where God speaks.

(i) Overhearing God's Speech to the Son

The epistle opens with an elevated period devoted to God's speech (1:1–2). It moves from a period *about* God's speech *through* the Son, to the performance of God's speech *to* the Son. As with Heb 12:18–29, the style of language employed in 1:5–14 matters. While the passage combines a number of quotations from the Psalms, the author does not simply list the verses. Rather, he introduces each with a rhetorical question that focuses on God's speech, indicated by the repetition of λέγω throughout.[15]

The use of rhetorical questions is itself important, according to Longinus. Rhetorical questions are effective especially when a "bare statement" would be inadequate. They add vigor and rapidity to discourse through the use of bracing language and the appeal to the imagination (*Subl.* 18.1). The rhetorical questions in Heb 1:5–14 dislocate the hearers, as they are aroused by the spontaneity and cross-examination of the questions (18.2). In

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[15] See εἶπεν (1:5); λέγει (1:6, 7); εἴρηκεν (1:13). God's speech (λέγει) is presumed grammatically in v. 8 (πρὸς δέ) and v. 10 (καί) as well.

addition, the use of the present tense to recount God's speech dislocates the hearers.[16] The present tense makes God's speech a "vivid present" that results in the "temporal dislocation" of the hearer.[17] God's speech is activated and performed in the presence of the hearers.

In this way, Hebrews 1:5–14 locates the hearers at the place where they overhear God's speech to the Son. But where does this performance take place? Just as Heb 12:22–24 locates the hearers at the foot of Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem, so Heb 1:5–14 places them in a position to hear God's speech outlining the Son's royal and priestly roles, which occurs from Zion.[18] Zion—as the historical and mythical site of God's rule[19]—corresponds to the place "on high" (ἐν ὑψηλοῖς) where the Son took his seat next to God (1:3), having been confirmed by God's speech.

(ii) Heeding God's Speech in the Wilderness

Hebrews 3:7–4:13 also moves the hearers to the place where God speaks by contemporizing the "Today" of Psalm 95 in the presence of the hearers. The creative use of Psa 95 encourages the hearers' dislocation from their current situation and moves them into the wilderness. The barrage of rhetorical questions (3:16–18) leads the hearers to consider the dangers of faithlessness (3:19) and to receive the Psalm's warning against a "hard heart," not as a distant reminder from the past, but as an urgent appeal in the present. By making small but significant changes to the Greek version of Psalm 95,[20] Heb 3:7–4:13 broadens the Psalm's warnings about responding inappropriately to God and

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[16] See λέγει in vv. 6 and 7. Λέγει in v. 7 applies not only to God's speech to the angels, but also to the Son in vv. 8–12.

[17] Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 201. Cf. *Subl.* 25.1.

[18] See Jipp, "Entrance into the Heavenly World."

[19] See Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*; Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*; Ollenburger, *Zion*; Josef Schreiner, *Sion-Jerusalem Jahwes Königssitz: Theologie der Heiligen Stadt im Alten Testament* (Münich: Kösel, 1963).

[20] The text found in Heb 3:8 indicates the adoption of the reading in the Greek version of Psa 94:8 rather than the one found in Psa 95:8 MT. The Greek version replaces the particular place names "Meribah" and "Massah" found in the Hebrew with "in the revolt" (ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ) and "on the day of testing" (κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ). In places, the passage improves upon the morphology of the text. See, e.g., εἴδοσαν (Psa 94:9) vs. εἶδον (Heb 3:9); εἶπα (Psa 94:10) vs. εἶπον in (Heb 3:10).

makes the warnings more general.[21] In the reconfigured version, the wilderness becomes paradigmatic for the people of God. It is no longer the consequence of disobedience or an indicator of God's wrath. It is not the site where the people test God, but the location where their fidelity to God is tested. Much like Heb 11, the wilderness in Heb 3–4 denotes the place where the people of God hear and respond to God's voice. The nature of their response—the outcome of their "testing" in the wilderness—determines their entrance into God's promised rest (4:1).

The story of the ancestors named in Psa 95 parallels the story of those addressed by the epistle. Like the ancestors named in Psa 95, the hearers are on the verge of entering God's promised rest (Heb 4:4–11). They too have been set free from slavery. Their freedom, however, is from the slavery of the fear of death and from the one who has the power over death (2:14–15), not from physical slavery and the power of Pharaoh. Like the ancestors, the hearers' redemption has been accompanied with signs and wonders (2:4).[22] As with the Israelites (Exod 3:12), the hearers' redemption leads them to the place where they worship God (Heb 12:22–24, 28–29), but this is not their final destination (Heb 13:14).[23] The location

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[21] In Heb 3:9, the author replaces the verb ἐδοκίμασαν ("they tested") found in LXX Psa 94:9 with the prepositional phrase ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ ("in testing" [BDAG]). The Hebrew version makes explicit that the "fathers" tested God, indicated by the first singular object suffix (נִי). The text in Hebrews makes the nature of this "testing" more ambiguous. Similar ambiguity attends to the proper meaning of πειράζω in Heb 3:9. Because there is no immediate direct object for the verb (cf. variant readings that add με), the verb πειράζω can mean either that the people were testing God (closer to the Hebrew version) or that they were being tested. (For the meaning of a similar word, παραπικραίνω, without a direct object, see BDAG, s.v. 2). Combined with the reconfigured version ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ, a similar intransitive use of πειράζω seems plausible here. For further discussion, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 115.

Combined, these modifications recast the Psalm quotation in a way that downplays the active resistance of the ancestors, suggesting a more neutral view of the time in the wilderness. Additional support for this reading comes from the author's addition of the particle διό in Heb 3:10. The addition interrupts the narrative flow of the Greek version of the Psalm. The punctuation of the Greek version casts the forty years in the wilderness not only as the time of testing but also the time of God's anger. In Hebrews, however, the addition of διό separates the forty years of wilderness wandering from God's anger. While the Greek version implies that the wilderness wandering was the result of God's anger, the version in Hebrews distances God's anger from the wilderness wandering and focuses attention more squarely on the disposition of the ancestors, i.e. μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν (Psa 94:8/Heb 3:8) and ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ (Psa 94:10/Heb 3:10).

[22] The combination σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα frequently appears in descriptions of God's redemptive acts in the exodus. See Exod 7:3, 9; 11:9, 10; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:28; 34:11.

[23] Though God promises Moses that he will lead the people of Israel to worship at the mountain (Exod 3:12), the mountain is only a midway point between God's acts of redemption and their final entrance into

of their worship, however, is also a place of testing (12:25).

While it is difficult to be certain, I suggest two analogous moments of testing in Israel's history that relate to how Hebrews presents the hearers' own testing. First, as many interpreters suggest, there is the allusion to Num 13–14 indicated by similar language in Heb 3:17 and Num 14:29, 32 LXX.[24] Beyond the verbal correspondence, there is also a thematic link concerning the ability of some to enter into God's rest. Though the ancestors experienced the signs of God (Num 14:11), they became paralyzed at the report of the spies, unwilling to move into the land of promise (13:25–14:11). The reconfigured warning in Hebrews, then, addresses the disposition of the hearers who risk sacrificing access to God's rest because the journey is too difficult or the obstacles too great. A second option connects more with the golden calf incident (Exod 32), and the nature of the testing concerns the absence of mediators, both for Israel and the hearers (cf. Heb 3:1–6; Heb 12:21). Both mediators have ascended from the midst of the people (Exod 32:1; Heb 1:3). In the absence of their mediator, the people of Israel turn away from God and demand that Aaron craft for them a golden calf (Exod 32:1). Likewise, as the hearers await the Son's return a second time (Heb 9:28), their fidelity to God is tested.

In either case, Heb 3:7–4:12 reimagines the hearers' present situation as the place of testing. It is the place where they hear God's voice and manifest their faithful hearing. It is this moment of testing—the "Today" of their contemporary hearing—that determines if they will enter into God's rest. The place to which they have come is a midway point between their initial redemption and their final settlement in the lasting city (13:14). It is

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the promised land.

[24] A major indicator in Hebrews that Num 14 is in mind is the use of the phrase τὰ κῶλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ in 3:17, which resembles Num 14:29, 32 LXX. Bryan J. Whitfield argues at length for the importance of Num 13–14 for understanding Heb 3–4. See Bryan J. Whitfield, "The Three Joshuas of Hebrews 3 and 4," *PRSt* (2010): 21–35; Bryan J. Whitfield, *Joshua Traditions and the Argument of Hebrews 3 and 4* (BZNW 194; Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013).

from this place that the hearers demonstrate their zeal to keep moving.[25]

(iii) Seeking God's Speech Outside the Gate

In the final chapter of Hebrews, the hearers are led out again to the place where God speaks. In Heb 13:13, the author presses the hearers: "Let us then go out to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach" (13:13). In this exhortation, the author connects Jesus's suffering "outside the gate" (ἔξω τῆς πύλης) with the movement of the hearers "outside the camp" (ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς). The cohortative subjunctive is rich in symbolic import. Going outside the camp signals the hearers' connection to Jesus, evoking both their access to God through the sanctification he provides (13:12) as well as their willing endurance of his reproach (13:13).

Going "outside the camp" resembles how Hebrews moves the hearers to the place of God's speech elsewhere in the epistle. The phrase "outside the camp" evokes the hearers' own testing in the wilderness depicted in Heb 3–4, but is even more closely aligned to the golden calf incident in Exodus. God spoke with Moses face-to-face "outside the camp (ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς)" (Exod 33:7, 11) following the construction of the golden calf. "Going outside the camp" thus locates the hearers at the place of God's continued speech. It signals the hearers as faithful and willing to hear God's voice (the opposite of hardening the heart in Heb 3–4). In addition, going "outside the camp" captures the responses of the faithful in Heb 11 who left homeland and security to follow God's call. Just as they became aliens and strangers—outsiders from the places in which they journeyed—so also the hearers must go outside the camp, making themselves pilgrims in pursuit of a lasting city (13:14). Finally, the proper response to God's speech outside the camp (13:15–16), like at foot of Mount Zion (12:28–29), is worship.[26] In sum, both Heb 12 and 13 move the hearers to the place where

[25] It is also *from* this mountain that the hearers are given a glimpse into the activity of their mediator. Though Moses's activity on behalf of the Israelites was obscured by smoke and clouds, Heb 4:14–10:18 enables the hearers to "see" the Son's high priestly work on their behalf.

[26] Whereas worship was enabled through grace in 12:28, it is enabled through Jesus in 13:15. The form of

God speaks and calls attention to the hearers' response to that speech.

The analytical framework provided by *De Sublimitate* has confirmed the motif of journeying in the epistle to Hebrews, argued vigorously by Ernst Käsemann in *Das wandernde Gottesvolk.*[27] Wandering is, for Käsemann, an "existential necessity" that arises and is, in some ways, *experienced* through the proclamation of God.[28] The event of God's proclamation reveals the people's promised future and moves the hearers into the wilderness as pilgrims en route to God's πατρίς, the city prepared for them. Käsemann is not as clear as one might hope in terms of *when* this decisive event takes place. Nevertheless, Käsemann does afford the proclamation of God some effective power. Implicit to Käsemann's approach is the assumption that part of the epistle's logic or function is that it enables the hearers to see themselves in the story of the Israel and to move into the wilderness in pursuit of God's promise in some powerful way. Viewing Hebrews as an example of sublime rhetoric enables us to more clearly note *how* the epistle does this as it moves the hearers into the world created by the text, into the place where God speaks.

(iv) Summary

Analyzing this passage in light of Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric and how it dislocates the hearer calls attention to other places in the composition that have a similar

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"acceptable" worship described in 12:28 aligns with a spiritualized form of sacrifice, a "sacrifice of praise" to God in 13:15. Although a "sacrifice of praise" may refer to an actual offering (see Lev 7:11–18), it is more likely a metaphor for prayer, as is common in the Psalms (see Psa 50:14, 23; 107:22). As such, it corresponds to the verbal nature of the fruit of "lips that confess his name" (13:15). Though ambiguous, the closest antecedent for the pronoun "his" is God, which again evokes the Psalms and the act of confessing or thanking God's name (see Psa 44:8; 54:6; 99:3).

[27] Ernst Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939). References that follow are from the English translation: Käsemann, *Wandering People*. As noted by Johnsson, Grässer viewed Käsemann's study as the turning point in the modern study of Hebrews. See William G. Johnsson, "The Cultus of Hebrews in Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *The Expository Times* (1978): 105. Käsemann finds the epistle's center of thought in the paraenesis in Heb 3:7–4:13, not in polemic against angels or in speculation about Melchizedek. This passage addresses—and forms the identity of—the hearers as pilgrims journeying much like the Israelites wandered through the wilderness after their redemption from Egypt. The epistle is concerned, says Käsemann, not with the danger of reverting to Judaism or Jewish practices (24), but with "the need for persistent endurance on the wandering assigned to the people of God" (173).

[28] See Käsemann, *Wandering People*, 19.

function. Consistently, the rhetoric of Hebrews seems to lead the hearers to inhabit the place where God speaks. Locating the hearers in this place leads the hearers to consider how they are responding to God's speech and incites them to increased attentiveness and worship. While Heb 12:18–29 occupies a climactic place in this moving rhetoric, it is not the final instance in which the epistle locates the hearers in the place where God speaks. Rather, as noted above, Heb 12:18–29 provides a motivating vision that compels them to keep seeking the place where God speaks, to move "outside the camp" to hear God's voice and to respond in worship. A major insight that results from applying *De Sublimitate* to Hebrews, then, is to see more clearly how the composition “moves” the hearers to the place where God speaks.

The Place to Which the Hearers Have Come

As much as Heb 12:18–29 *dislocates* the hearers to the place where God speaks, it also *locates* them in a particular place where they respond to God's speech. The cohortative subjunctive in 12:28 places the hearers among the "we," among other community members who worship in awe and reverence. The "textual journey" of Heb 12:18–29 ends in what Too calls "reinstitution,"[29] the creation and reconstruction of social reality and public space. Elements of this reconstruction are present already in Heb 12:22–24 with the social and political markers mapped onto heavenly realities; the worship of the hearers somehow joins with that of the heavenly *ekklesia* and those who have been enrolled as citizens in the heavenly Jerusalem. The same can be said of the hearers' anticipatory participation in the "unshakable kingdom" (12:28).

Additionally, the "spatialized and moved language" of Heb 12:18–29 leads to the hearers' "reinstitution" among the gathered community. Aspects of this reinstitution

[29] "The sublime operates *within* the contemporary public sphere in order to depart from it, and the transport (i.e. *ekstasis*) of the audience which sublime produces is one which thus reconstitutes civic identity elsewhere" (Too, *Ancient Literary Criticism*, 213).

appear in the language of exhortation that frequently combines attention to community concerns and religious practices (Heb 12:28–13:17). In Heb 12:28–29, the exhortations are religious in nature, outlining the nature of the hearers' response to God. Yet, this exhortation is "placed" language: it concerns not only what the hearers should do in response to God's speech, but also where they do it.

(i) Protecting the Integrity of the Place

In Heb 13:1–7, the exhortations focus on practices that protect the integrity of the place to which the hearers have come. Mutual love, hospitality, and sympathy for those in prison (vv. 1–3) are practices demanded of the hearers. These practices offer relief to the ostracism and persecution faced by others (see 10:32–34). Next, the integrity of the community is protected by honoring the marriage bed and avoiding the love of money (vv. 4–5). Both practices were vital for preserving the sanctity of the community and are topics found in several early Christian writers.[30] The command to avoid the love of money represents the particular perspective of Hebrews. While the love of money (φιλαργυρία) was a vice denounced ubiquitously in antiquity,[31] the author of Hebrews integrates it within the specific concerns of the epistle. By appending allusions to God's care from the LXX to the exhortation,[32] the author of Hebrews adds a distinctly religious tone to this common moral exhortation. Avoiding the love of money demonstrates the hearers' fidelity to God and their commitment to other community members. It makes them imitators of the faithful in Heb 11 who were willing to suffer the loss of possessions and comfort in obedience to God's call. By avoiding selfish avarice, the hearers offer a tangible benefit by sharing with those whose livelihoods have been lost (cf. 10:34).[33] The hearers' relationship

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[30] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 387.

[31] See the list of parallel texts in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 387nn45–47.

[32] The material found in v. 6 closely resembles LXX Psa 117:6. The resource text for the material found in v. 5 is more difficult to determine. See the discussion in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 388–89.

[33] Similarly, Filson explains: "Love of money can be an ugly expression of deep-rooted selfishness. It can keep Christians from helping their fellow-men who are in need. It can make them think of protecting their

to money and possessions demonstrates their concern for other community members—for the place to which they have come—and manifests their trust in God's provision.

(ii) Respecting the Leaders of the Place

The next series of exhortations (13:7–17) is framed with directives about community leaders. In the first place, the hearers must remember their leaders who spoke the word of God to them.[34] In addition to remembering their leaders, the hearers are exhorted to consider the outcome (ἔκβασις) of their lives and to imitate their faithful response to God. Similar to the example of Jesus in 12:1–3,[35] the leaders model the dispositions and practices of faithfulness and solidarity that the hearers should emulate. They are counter examples to Esau's short-sidedness (12:17) and parallel the heroes of faith enumerated in Heb 11.[36] The behavior and disposition of the community leaders locate the example of faithful response within the history of the community and its continued gathering together. Finally, the leaders exercise authority over the hearers (13:17). The hearers are to entrust (πείθεσθε) themselves to their leaders and obey (ὑπείκετε) them. The two responses denote the trustworthiness of the leaders (accentuated by their model lives) and their authority over the hearers. The author grounds the responses of the hearers to their leaders in the reality that the leaders are ultimately accountable to God. The result of the hearers' response is that the leaders are able to exercise their authority over the hearers in joy rather than discontented groaning (13:17).

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possessions rather than maintaining their solidarity with those who are outcast, despised, and ill-treated" (Filson, *Yesterday*, 79). Attridge makes a similar connection between 10:34 and the "detachment from material goods" commanded in 13:5 (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 388).

[34] Earlier in the epistle, the author connects the message of salvation that was delivered to the hearers with those who heard the Lord declare it (2:2–4).

[35] As noted by Attridge, this correspondence seems intentional, given the use of ἀφοράω in 12:2 and a similar verb, ἀναθεωρέω in 13:7 (*Hebrews*, 392).

[36] Perhaps the example of the leaders is more realistic than the list in Heb 11. The list of faithful in Heb 11 shows that God's people have always been characterized by faithful trust in unseen realities, a radical reliance on God's promised future. Yet, the temporal and physical distance between Abraham and the hearers of the epistle threatens to make the faithful responses noted in Heb 11 exemplary, but not necessarily feasible; the list runs the risk of becoming mythical, but not livable. The behavior and dispositions of the leaders of the community, however, provide a more tangible demonstration of the faithful response heralded in Heb 11.

(iii) Tending to the Center of the Place

The place to which they have come is centered and based on the priestly work of Jesus. In Heb 13:8, the author affirms the permanence and stability of Jesus: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." The short sentence captures key points made elsewhere in the epistle. Jesus's permanence—his "sameness"—is signaled by his resurrection life and his session at God's right hand (see Heb 1:12). Jesus, unlike the priests in the Levitical system, is not limited by sinfulness or death; his priesthood is eternal (see especially 7:11–28). Likewise, his sacrifice is permanent, securing "once for all" (7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10) the hearers' access to God's presence. The permanence of Jesus stands in contrast to "strange teachings" and "regulations about food" that provide no benefit. It is grace—a central feature of Jesus's sacrifice and intercession on behalf of the hearers (4:16) and the means through which they worship God (12:28)—that proves effective, as it strengthens the heart (13:9).[37] Speaking more obliquely, but in a way that evokes the earlier comparison of the two priestly systems, the author says the hearers have a different altar from which they eat (13:10). Though veiled in metaphor and symbolism, this altar relates to Jesus's sacrificial death, his "suffering outside the gate," which sanctified the people through his own blood (13:12), and the access he grants to the true altar in the heavenly sanctuary.[38]

(iv) Summary

This section has attended to the "place" to which the hearers have come (12:18, 22). I have highlighted two aspects of this place. First, the style of Heb 12:18–29 brings the

[37] In addition to its traditional overtones, Attridge notes how grace functions as a "recurrent motif involving the assistance which comes from the divine throne (4:16), which characterizes the 'spirit' (10:29), and which the addresses have been warned not to lose (12:15)" (*Hebrews*, 393). While Attridge insists that this meaning of χάρις differs from the use of the same word in Heb 12:28, I have opted for a similar meaning in my interpretation in the previous chapter.

[38] Because the author of Hebrews does not elaborate more on this "altar," interpretations have multiplied. See the discussion of possible meanings in Filson, *Yesterday*, 48–54, who connects the word with the similarly ambiguous phrase "doctrines and foods." Attridge concludes that altar "is used in a symbolic fashion typical of the early church to refer to the sacrifice of Christ in all of the complexity with which that is understood in Hebrews" (*Hebrews*, 396).

hearers into the place where God speaks, a recurring function of the rhetoric of Hebrews. Second, the place to which they have come signals the location where they hear and respond to God's speech, namely the community of those gathered to hear God's speech. The two aspects of place overlap, as the place of God's speech is located among those gathered together. Drawing near to this place, however, is not easy. Rather, by refusing to neglect and shrink away from this place, the hearers experience hardship. In the next section, I consider how *De Sublimitate* illumines how Heb 12:18–29 addresses this hardship, rousing the hearers from apathy and stirring them to endurance.

Moving the Hearers to Persevere

In addition to moving the hearers to the place of God's speech, Hebrews 12:18–29 moves by provoking the hearers to faithful action. The capacity for language to stir the hearers—to awaken them, to overwhelm them, to inspire them—is an important function of sublime rhetoric. Sublime rhetoric leads to *ekstasis* not just in terms of spatial and temporal dislocation (as Too's analysis suggests); it is also ecstatic in the sense of moving the hearers from one state to another. Sublime rhetoric stirs the hearer to wonder and to awe. It strikes and it overwhelms. Longinus's treatise is particularly apt for showing how this potential of language to move "from stasis" is at work in Hebrews. Before analyzing Heb 12:18–29, I return to *De Sublimitate* to better understand how sublime rhetoric stirs the hearers from stasis.

Apathy and the Effects of Sublime Rhetoric (Subl. 44)

In the final chapter of the treatise, the importance of the stirring effect of sublime rhetoric takes on new focus as an antidote to apathy. It will be recalled that *Subl.* 44 recounts a conversation between Longinus and an unnamed philosopher. The two figures are discussing the apparent lack of contemporary literary genius, despite the ubiquity of speakers with persuasive and charming natures. There is a dearth, they both agree, in

works of "really sublime and transcendent natures" (*Subl.* 44.1). The two disagree, though, on the ultimate cause of this decline. For the philosopher, it is the loss of democracy that stifles creative genius. For Longinus, the problem is not cultural or even political, but personal and moral in nature. Human genius is not enervated by the rise of Roman imperial rule but rather by the stifling effects of vice.

The vices enumerated by Longinus in this chapter emphasize their degenerative quality. The commonly denounced vices of misdirected love—love of money (φιλοχρηματία), love of pleasure (φιληδονία), avarice (φιλαργυρία)—are said to "sink our lives, soul and all, into the depths" (*Subl.* 44.6). Along with these, a number of vices follow: immense and licentious wealth (ἀκολουθεῖ τῳ ἀμέτρῳ πλούτῳ καὶ ἀκολάστῳ): extravagance (πολυτέλεια), boastfulness (ἀλαζονεία), arrogance (τῦφος), wantonness (τρυφή), insolence (ὕβρις), disorderly living (παρανομία), and shamelessness (ἀναισχυντία) (44.7). These vices keep people from looking upwards and cause them to forget their "good name" (44.7). Vice ruins their "greatness of soul" and causes them to ignore the "development of their immortal souls" because they find wonder (ἐκθαυμάζω) in the ordinary rather than the extraordinary (44.8).

(i) Moving the Hearers to Wonder

Given humanity's tendency to be moved to wonder by ordinary things, the description of the wondrous effects of sublime rhetoric elsewhere in the treatise acquire new meaning. In *Subl.* 35.5, commenting on the imperfections found in some examples of sublime rhetoric, Longinus insists that it is "always the unusual which wins our wonder (θαυμαστόν)." Just as the ordinary in nature (a stream or a small fire in the dark) pale in comparison to the extraordinary (a raging river, burning stars in the night sky, an erupting volcano), so ordinary language fails to attain the wonder of sublime rhetoric, even if it is stylistically or grammatically superior.

Other aspects of sublime rhetoric enable it to win the wonder of its hearers. Word choice moves and seduces the hearers (30.1). Likewise, the melodious arrangement of words, likened to the use of a flute or harp in religious festivals, invokes a "marvelous spell" upon the hearers (39.1–2). Longinus continues:

> We hold, then, that composition, which is a kind of melody in words—words which are part of man's nature and reach not his ears only but his very soul—stirring as it does myriad ideas of words, thoughts, things, beauty, musical charm, all of which are born and bred in us...we hold, I say, that by these very means it casts a spell on us and always turns our thoughts towards what is majestic and dignified and sublime and all else that it embraces, winning a complete mastery over our minds. (*Subl.* 39.3)

Sublime rhetoric, here connected specifically with the arrangement of words (σύνθεσις), moves by winning the wonder of the hearer. It draws on the hearer's soul, not simply her ears. It "stirs" to the surface of her soul things planted there by nature. Sublime rhetoric overwhelms the hearer, exercising a certain amount of agency over her. It seduces. It casts a spell on the hearer. It wins "complete mastery" over the mind.

As indicated by the quotation above, the wondrous effect of sublime rhetoric rouses and overwhelms. As it does so, sublime rhetoric shifts the "gaze" of the hearer upward. In this way, sublime rhetoric remedies the effects of the vices enumerated in *Subl.* 44. Vice lowers the gaze and sinks the soul; sublime rhetoric raises the eyes and uplifts the soul.[39] The ability of sublime rhetoric to stir and reorient the hearer serves, in final analysis, as powerful jolt intended to neutralize the widespread apathy among Longinus's contemporaries:

> [W]hat spends the spirit of the present generation is the apathy (ῥᾳθυμία) in which all

[39] Longinus is confident in humanity's potential, but less optimistic about the actual practices and dispositions of most people. On one hand, he assumes that Nature (ἡ φύσις) has endowed humanity with the capacity to contemplate not only things within the universe, but things beyond it. Nature invites humanity into a "great gathering" (μεγάλην τινὰ πανήγυριν) where humans become spectators and participants in Nature's activity (35.2). Humanity, Longinus explains, has an innate desire for what is "great and more divine (τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς δαιμονιωτέρου)" than itself. Humanity's capacity for contemplation and intelligence (ἡ θεωρία καὶ διάνοια τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπιβολῆς), moreover, cannot be contained by the universe or the things inside of it. On the other hand, Longinus assumes that most people fail to realize and employ this capacity for contemplation. The vices enumerated by Longinus only make matters worse. Rather than desiring great and divine things, most of Longinus's contemporaries are content to fixate on base things immediately before them—pleasure, money, and glory.

> but a few of us pass our lives, only exerting ourselves (πονοῦντες) or showing any enterprise (ἀναλαμβάνοντες) for the sake of getting praise or pleasure out of it, never from the honorable and admirable motive of doing good to the world.[40]

This apathy manifests itself, not by a lack of effort (indicated by the use of πονέω and a ἀναλαμβάνω), but in effort directed toward the wrong ends, namely praise and pleasure. To better understand how sublime rhetoric moves the hearer "from stasis," more needs to be said about the meaning of ῥαθυμία.

(ii) The Nature of Apathy (ῥαθυμία)

In its most neutral sense, ῥαθυμία refers to a time of lethargy and indifference.[41] Frequently, though, this ease of life provides opportunity for behaviors worthy of censure. The word describes, not those who enjoy a temporary season of rest, but who actively avoid hard work and trial.[42] In military contexts, ῥαθυμία often results in the defeat of armies, the loss of strongholds, and the removal of kings from their offices.[43] The word also denotes a lack of attention or a general unwillingness to fulfill one's duty.[44] Negligent guards allow the enemy to slip by unawares because of their ῥαθυμία.[45] Kings who should have known better or acted sooner are blamed for disasters and famines.[46] Frequently the word appears in parallel with or as a synonym to ἀμελεία, "carelessness."[47]

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[40] *Subl.* 44.11. Galen (*Meth. Med.* 1.77K) perhaps comes closest to Longinus in deploring the apathy of an entire generation; though Galen does not combine this sentiment with the list of moral vices as does Longinus, he notes that apathy leads to the creation of inaccurate or incomplete medical treatises.

[41] See Polybius, *Hist.* 10.19.5 (used in parallel with "repose" [ἀνάπαυσις] without a negative valence); Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 11.69.4; 17.79.3; Josephus, *A.J.* 12.4 (Ptolemy's siege of Jerusalem was successful because of "ease" on the Sabbath); Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 3.111 (used along with leisure [σχολή] and relaxation [ἄνεσις]).

[42] See Demosthenes, *Chers.* 49; *4 Philip.* 24, 71; [*Syntax.*] 20; *Andr.* 78; *Timocr.* 186; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *2 Amm.* 12; Plutarch, *Tranq. an.* 465D; Lucian, *Cat.* 8.

[43] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 19.95.6.

[44] See Lysias, *Theom.* 1.10; Demosthenes, *3 Olynth.* 34; *1 Philip.* 1; *4 Philip.* 7; *Chers.* 46; [*Theocr.*] 63; *Treat. Alex.* 23; Lycurgus, *Leocr.* 9; Aristotle, *Ath. pol.* 8.5; Polybius, *Hist.* 15.25.23; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 34/35.38.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.13.5; Josephus, *A.J.* 1.9; Plutarch, *Ant.* 6.6; *Cohib. ira* 459C; *Frat. amor.* 483A; *Sera* 556E; Lucian, *Tim.* 4.

[45] See Aen. Tact. 16.12; Polybius, *Hist.* 2.5.7; 7.15.7; 9.12.4; Josephus, *B.J.* 4.297. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 19.96.2 where deception is meant to instill in the enemy a sense of ῥαθυμία so that attack may be made unexpectedly.

[46] See Polybius, *Hist.* 3.81.4; 5.36.7; 5.42.5; Plutarch, *Dion* 7.6; Josephus, *B.J.* 6.337.

[47] See Plato, *Phaed.* 99B; Xenophon, *Memor.* 3.5.5; Demosthenes, *Chers.* 34; *3 Philip.* 5; Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.6.3; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 17.79.6; 36.12.1; Philo, *Aet.* 11; *Prov.* 2.58; *Deus* 164; *Praem.* 12; *Somn.* 1.8; *Spec.* 2.6; 3.147; Plutarch, *Alex.* 49.5; *Amic. mult.* 95D; *Curios.* 516B. The carelessness associated with ῥαθυμία may explain the

If ῥαθυμία refers to the physical and mental prowess of people—their inactivity, laziness, carelessness, and undutifulness, it also conveys a more distinctly moral or philosophical problem as well.[48] Apathy leads to the onset of other vices.[49] Apathy is likened to cowardice.[50] Polybius links it to both boastfulness (ἀλαζονεία) and avarice (φιλοχρημοσύνη).[51] It is also connected to the lack of self-control.[52] Aristotle lists ῥαθυμία as an attendant vice of ἀκολασία ("intemperance"),[53] and, like *Subl.* 44, as an accomplice to luxury (τρυφή).[54] In general, ῥαθυμία applies to those who shirk the hard work needed for self-improvement and making progress in virtue.[55]

Among these moral connotations of ῥαθυμία, there are two instances that provide particular assistance in understanding the use of the word in *Subl.* 44. In *Every Good Man is Free*, Philo takes human potential for granted. The problem, according to him, is not lack of knowledge, but a lack of effort directed to what really matters:

> And yet these things for which we should strive (σπεύδειν) eagerly, things so closely akin to ourselves, so truly our own, we treat with great slackness and constant indifference (ὄκνος καὶ ῥαθυμία) and thus destroy the germs of excellence (τὰ καλοκἀγαθίας σπέρματα), while those things in which deficiency were a merit we desire with an insatiable yearning. Consequently land and sea are full of the rich, the

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shortcomings of a previous author (Galen, *Nat. Fac.* 2.8.109; 3.10.179) or it may arise from inexperience or lack of knowledge (Polybius, *Hist*. 5.42.5.).

[48] For a general sense, see Polybius, *Hist.* 5.87.3. Cf. Plutarch, *De Cohib. ira* 460E.

[49] See Philo, *Agr.* 39.

[50] Polybius, *Hist.* 3.6.12; 15.34.6. A particular vivid (and intensely misogynistic) example of the connection with cowardice and luxury appears in Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 2.23.1. Dio Chrysostom (*Orat.* 29.17) suggests ῥαθυμία is the opposite—or at least prevents the adoption—of the virtues courage and self-control. Similarly, bravery enables a person to endure hardship (πόνος) and reject apathy (ῥαθυμία) (*Orat.* 31.15–17).

[51] Polybius, *Hist.* 36.17.17.

[52] See *Let. Aris.* 245; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 2.26.4; Polybius, *Hist.* 5.48.2; 5.88.3; 8.27.7; 39.7.7; Plutarch, *Gen. Socr.* 594D; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 12.36. Clement of Alexandria, *Protrep.* 11.91P (cf. *Protrep.* 12.94P which connects ραθυμία to idolatry and ignorance).

[53] See LSJ, s.v. ἀκολασία. The list of vices related to ἀκολασία resembles the vice list in *Subl.* 44 summarized above: "Intemperance is accompanied by disorder, shamelessness, irregularity, luxury, slackness, carelessness, negligence, remissness" (Aristotle, [*Virt. vit.*] 1251a22 [LCL: Rackham, modified]). Greek text: ἀκολουθεῖ δὲ τῇ ἀκολασίᾳ ἀταξία, ἀναίδεια, ἀκοσμία, τρυφή, ῥᾳθυμία, ἀμέλεια, ὀλιγωρία, ἔκλυσις. Andronicus of Rhodes repeats Aristotle's vice list (see [*Pass.*] 2.9.4).

[54] A similar connection between ῥαθυμία and τρυφή occurs in Demosthenes, *Cor.* 46; Strabo, *Geogr.* 3.2.13; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 2.preface 1; 2.21.2; 7.12.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 12.6.2; Philo, *Prob.* 103; Plutarch, *Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 3.1–3; *Marc.* 21.6; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 12.36; 33.22–23; 61.4–6. Cf. 3 Macc 4:8 in which "banqueting and youthful amusement (εὐωχίας καὶ νεωτερικῆς ῥᾳθυμίας)" (NETS) are contrasted with mourning.

[55] See Plato, *Resp.* 504C; Demosthenes, [*Erot.*] 37–38; Philo, *Agr.* 149; *Fug.* 122; Plutarch, *Arat.* 47.1; *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 47.1; [*Lib. ed.*] 2C; *Per.* 2.1; Josephus, *A.J.* 12.191; Lucian, *Hermot.* 4; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat*. 3.19; 70.1.

> distinguished and the men of pleasure, but of the wise and just and virtuous, the number is small. (*Prob.* 71–72 [LCL: Colson])

Humans tend to neglect the "germs of excellence"—human faculties and abilities gifted to humans through nature—and they fixate instead on the acquisition of fleeting wealth, glory, and pleasure.[56] Like Longinus, Philo sees apathy as a threat to humanity's inborn capacity for contemplation and "looking upward." By focusing the soul's gaze on things earthly and ephemeral, apathy leads ultimately to a further entanglement in vicious behaviors and dispositions, a lowering of the soul's "gaze."

The second important example comes from Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Discourse* (*Orat.* 12). In this discourse, Dio considers human knowledge of divine things and, in particular, Zeus, before whose statue the discourse takes place. In contrast to the nearly automatic reverence of both humans and non-humans alike, Dio turns to lambaste the Epicureans who deny this innate conception of god:

> [T]hese men, then, despise all things divine, and having set up the image of one single female divinity, depraved and monstrous, representing a kind of wantonness or self-indulgent ease and unrestrained lewdness (τρυφήν τινα ἢ ῥᾳθυμίαν πολλὴν καὶ ἀνειμένην ὕβριν), to which they gave the name of Pleasure... (*Orat.* 12.36 [LCL: Cohoon])

Here, Dio depicts the Epicureans as doing the unthinkable. They deny what is self-evident to all humans—wise and Barbarian, poet and philosopher. Rather than consider god's workings in the universe and respond in reverence, the Epicureans devote themselves to pleasure instead. Their devotion to pleasure, moreover, leads to apathy and other vices often associated with it (i.e. τρυφή and ὕβρις). Although the language is different, the overall impression is quite like that of *Subl.* 44. Apathy, either a consequence or a catalyst to an unrestrained pursuit of pleasure and luxury, causes people to "lower their gaze," to deny their innate knowledge and connection to the divine, and to descend into a spiral of vices that results in their eventual ruin.

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[56] Elsewhere, Philo praises those who have turned aside from such earthly goods and have begun to be drawn upwards to dwell with divine natures, a move prevented by the onset of ῥαθυμία in some (Philo, *Deus* 151).

In sum, writers in antiquity view the onset of ῥαθυμία and its consequences with concern. The word ranges in meaning from an innocent cessation of activity to an irresponsible, intentional laziness or neglect of duty. In other instances, ῥαθυμία attains a more strictly moral connotation, since the inactivity of ῥαθυμία leads too easily to or results too readily from other vices. The absence or avoidance of work leads to carousing and drunkenness. Ease leads to luxury, which fans the flames of avarice and greed. Further, it comes to signify a stultified inattentiveness, both of ignoring one's role as soldier or ruler and of a more pernicious disregard for one's personal development and progress in virtue. Obsession with acquiring wealth and procuring pleasure foster and feed this form of apathy. Apathy both distorts and cripples, as it fixates attention on pedestrian matters such as wealth, glory, and pleasure.

(iii) Addressing Apathy

While many agree on the dangers of ῥαθυμία, there are different approaches suggested for counteracting it. Philosophy, especially through hard work and *askesis* can expel the effects of apathy.[57] Philo says that the Sabbath, contrary to what some may assume, does not lead to apathy but rather "it always inures (ἐθίζει) men to endure hardship (κακοπαθεῖν) and incites (ἀλείφει) them to labour (πόνον), and spurns those who would idle their time away."[58] The Law's injunction to practice Sabbath, in other words, moves people from stasis to virtuous action. Similarly, Dio Chrysostom asserts that education (παιδευθέντα), like Philo's Torah or philosophy's regimen, can restore humanity's innate wisdom, which has been lost due to lack of judgment (φαυλότης) and apathy (ῥαθυμία).[59]

It is not just philosophy and education, however, that can rouse the apathetic. Dio

[57] Plutarch, *Virt. prof.* 76F–77A; Similarly, Philo, *Ebr.* 20–23, says that hard work and self-training lead to prudence (φρόνησις) while apathy, indolence, and luxury (ῥαθυμία, τρυφή, θρύψις) lead to folly (ἀφροσύνη).

[58] Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.60 (LCL: Colson).

[59] *Orat.* 68.4–5.

Chrysostom acknowledges that music can stir the hear "from stasis" by striking a sense of fear in the hearers.[60] Likewise, a storm or the threat of war can "arouse and sway" those who have become apathetic.[61] Similarly, and closest to the thought of *De Sublimitate*, language itself—for example, the strong speech of a king or military leader—can dissipate the apathy of citizens or troops, moving them to virtuous and courageous action. Demosthenes—praised throughout *De Sublimitate* as an exemplar of sublime rhetoric—provides the model of this stirring form of speech:

> But against their will he keeps rousing (ἀνίστησι) his fellow citizens, who are asleep as though drugged, by using his outspoken words as it were to cut away and cauterize their sloth (τῆς ῥᾳθυμίας) with little heed for what they would like to hear.[62]

It is the words of Demosthenes, not a philosophical program or rigorous self-discipline, that rouses the hearers from their "drugged" sleep and removes their apathy so that they can act. Demosthenes speech rouses the hearers "from stasis."

Returning to Longinus, important connections should be evident. In the final chapter of the treatise, Longinus sounds like a philosopher. His enumeration of vices resembles the vice lists found in the writings of other Hellenistic philosophers. Likewise, he notes how vice weakens humans, how it robs them of their freedom and their natural abilities, and how it distorts and distracts. Ultimately, he generalizes the problem facing his generation as pervasive apathy, a deep disinterest in making progress in virtue. Yet, Longinus offers no regimen for self-discipline, no particularized pedagogy for progress in virtue. Rather, much like Demosthenes's moving words, sublime rhetoric functions as a substitute for philosophy. The ability of sublime rhetoric to arouse and command—to move the audience "from stasis"—serves as a powerful antidote to apathy. The stirring, surprising, wonder-inducing nature of sublime rhetoric thus awakens hearers from their stupor and allows them to make progress in virtue.

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[60] See *Orat.* 1.1; 2.57.

[61] *Orat.* 31.165 (LCL: Cohoon and Crosby).

[62] Lucian, [*Encom. Demosth.*] 36 (LCL: MacLeod). See similarly, [*Encom. Demosth.*] 7.

The Hearers' Need for Endurance

The ability of sublime rhetoric to counteract apathy and to move hearers from stasis provides insight into the function of Hebrews. If, as the first section of this chapter argues, the rhetoric of Hebrews "moves" the hearers from one place to another, it also stirs them to *keep* moving. The epistle presents the hearers as weary travelers in need of encouragement from one another (3:13; 10:25) and the author (13:22) in order to continue on their way. Their journey has been one of suffering and struggle (2:18; 3:15; 10:32–34; 13:3). Their progress onward will require all of their effort (4:11) and more struggle (12:1–2) as well. In addition, the author likens the hearers to beleaguered athletes on the verge of defeat (12:12–13), exhorting them to do whatever is necessary to achieve the goal. Finally, the author pictures the hearers as soldiers entrenched in battle, demanding that they hold the line and not withdraw (10:39).

By addressing the hearers as travelers, athletes, and soldiers, the author's encouragement resembles similar calls to endurance in epic poetry, historiography, and philosophy.[63] As in many of these other calls, endurance in Hebrews is threatened by the

[63] See Themistocles Anthony Adamopoulo, “Endurance, Greek and Early Christian: The Moral Transformation of the Greek Idea of Endurance, from the Homeric Battlefield to the Apostle Paul,” (Ph.D., Brown University, 1996). In his comprehensive analysis of the concept, Adamopoulo suggests the two earliest forms of endurance related to the warrior and the traveller (6). For the warrior, endurance manifests itself in a warrior's willingness to face trials, his refusal to fall back or desert, and his insistence in moving forward (60–61). These notions of the enduring warrior eventually made their way into ancient philosophy and Greek athletics (for philosophy, see 75–164; for athletics, see 164–195). Though there are traces of the shift in the pre-Socratics, Plato in his *Leches* and later in the *Republic* first transforms the warrior's endurance into a philosophical ideal (14). Among the Cynic and Stoics in particular, the enduring warrior is transformed into the enduring sage whose endurance leads to his moral transformation, both by resisting the internal pressure of vice and the external pressure inflicted by the masses (116–19). The sage then becomes the "general" who exhorts his soldiers—those who have begun to make progress in virtue—to keep battling for the upper-hand against vice and abuse. Adamopoulo notes, in addition, that the concept of athletic endurance or "agnostic endurance" eventually finds its way into philosophical discourse as well: "Accordingly the athletic metaphor (like the military metaphor) lent itself perfectly with the philosophic idea of the sage's agonistic ideals of 'training' (ἄσκησις), 'pain'/'hardship' (πόνους) as well as his virtue of endurance (ὑπομονή)" (182).

It is important to note, then, that endurance is closely connected with training and hardships, both of which play an important role in the hortatory program of Hebrews. The two are, in addition, often dismissed or avoided as a result of apathy or sluggishness. In one philosophical transformation of the concept, endurance comes to signify the opposite of a life of luxury and extravagance (see Musonius Rufus, *On Furnishings* 20.2.4–10 [quoted on p. 42]). Endurance is also opposed to "softness" (μαλακία) in Plato (*Resp.* 410D–E; quoted on p. 92). On the opposite end, endurance comes through toil (πόνος) and struggle (ἀγών);

onset of apathy.[64] The perspective of *De Sublimitate* regarding the capacity of language to move the hearers from apathy leads to a fuller appreciation for how the rhetoric of Hebrews curbs apostasy and provokes endurance.

(i) Rousing the Hearers to Keep Moving

The place of Heb 12:18–29 within its literary context is central to this larger function of the “moving” rhetoric of Hebrews. As the climactic moment in a section of the letter focused on endurance and faithfulness (Heb 10:19–12:17), this passage rouses the hearers "from stasis," enabling them to continue on their journey.[65] The imagery and locations of these verses—whether the terrifying depiction of God's speech at Sinai/Horeb, the stunning gathering at Mount Zion, or the image of heaven and earth tottering—awaken the hearers to the awesome reality of God's speaking presence. The passage lends to the empirical place to which they have come a sense of solemnity and awe. The mention of God's fiery presence in 12:29 reminds the hearers of the seriousness of approaching the living God and the space in which God speaks.

If they have come to the place where God speaks, they have also come (as I noted above) to the gatherings which some have begun to neglect (10:25). Continuing to gather

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see, e.g., Seneca, *Epist*. 29. It will be recalled from the survey above that extravagance and luxury were often connected to apathy and its consequences.

[64] Identifying apathy or some form of lethargy as the primary problem facing the recipients of Hebrews is not original. Many commentators consider the emotional and spiritual state of the hearers when they discuss the occasion and purpose of the epistle. Koester claims that the epistle betrays "signs of malaise" among the recipients (Koester, *Hebrews*, 71). Johnson suggests the recipients have begun "falling away from an earlier enthusiasm (Johnson, *Hebrews*, 36)." Thompson, likewise, wonders if the "initial intensity" of the new religious movement has dwindled due to social pressures on the hearers (Thompson, *Hebrews,* 9). De Silva discerns a "general faltering in commitment" among the hearers (de Silva, *Perseverance in Gratitude,* 17). Attridge suggests two interrelated dangers facing the hearers: the external pressure of persecution and a waning commitment on the part of the hearers (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 13). McCown, in a dissertation exploring the meaning of the phrase λόγος παρακλήσεως (13:22) links the epistle's self-designation with the problem of apathy. See Wayne G. McCown, “Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΣΕΩΣ: The Nature and Function of the Hortatory Sections in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” (ThD Diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1970). McCown concludes that the hortatory nature of Hebrews "stands in the service of *paraclesis* for a community plagued by lassitude, languor, and lethargy” (268).

[65] I will develop this more fully below. Suffice it to say here that one of the effects of the passage is its ability to invigorate the hearers to practice the exhortations found in 12:28–13:17. While some of these resemble commonplace moral topics, others are more specifically tied to the community's well-being and gathering together. If (as I argue below) solidarity and commitment to the community are the primary places where the hearers' endurance is tested, the exhortations in chapter 13 are in no way ancillary to Heb 12:18–29 or the epistle more generally.

together could be difficult and costly. In a world where religious affiliation and practice carried with them very real social and political implications, gathering together could and did lead to social ostracism, the loss of goods, and even imprisonment, as the epistle itself suggests (see 6:10; 10:32–34). Given such hardships, it is not surprising that some would begin to drift from these gatherings or that their enthusiasm to keep meeting would wane.

Hebrews addresses this potential danger—this form of "stasis"—with its moving rhetoric. Worley, in a dissertation exploring the role of promissory language in Hebrews, asserts: "[I]f Hebrews is an Exhortation it is an Exhortation to endurance, warning those who would retreat, emboldening those who face struggle."[66] Worley suggests that closest parallel to the function of exhortation in Hebrews is found in the encouragement of generals who exhort their troops to endurance, steadfastness, and bravery in battle.[67] These speeches to soldiers—facing both the dangers of opposing armies and flagging courage or commitment—were "intended to embolden and hearten the spirit."[68]

An example from Polybius supports Worley's suggestion: Aemilius has been sent to exhort (παρακαλέω) the soldiers gathered against the Carthaginians (*Hist.* 3.102.2). Having reminded the soldiers of their past victories in far more perilous and uneven battles (3.108.4–10; 3.109.4) and emphasizing the example and solidarity of the consuls among them (3.109.1), Aemilius addresses the soldiers:

> "Therefore, my men, every measure having been taken to secure victory for you, one thing alone is wanting, your own zeal and resolution (βουλήσεως καὶ προθυμίας), and as to this it is not, I think, fitting that I should exhort (παρακαλεῖσθαι) you further. For those who in some countries serve for hire or for those who are about to fight for their neighbors by the terms of an alliance, the moment of greatest peril is during the battle

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[66] David Ripley Worley, "God's Faithfulness to Promise: The Hortatory Use of Commissive Language in Hebrews," (Ph.D., Yale University, 1981), 57.

[67] Adamopoulo makes a similar suggestion: "An important element in Greek (and Hebraic) warfare was the commander's exhortatory speech, imminently prior to the actual battle. The exhortatory speech, was intended to arouse the soldiers' focus onto the battle, encourage them often by pejorative remarks about the enemy's prowess, and instill a sense of endurance. The cry for endurance generally took the formulaic structure of 'stand firm' and may be accompanied by its negative form 'do not flee'" (Adamopoulo, "Endurance," 72).

[68] Worley, "God's Faithfulness to Promise," 34.

> itself, but the result makes little difference to them, and in such a case exhortation is necessary (ἀναγκαῖος ὁ τῆς παρακλήσεως γίνεται τρόπος). But those who like you are about to fight not for others, but for yourselves, your country, and your wives and children, and for whom the results that will ensue are of vastly more importance than the present peril, require not to be exhorted to do their duty but only to be reminded of it (ὑπομνήσεως μόνον, παρακλήσεως δ᾽ οὐ προσδεῖ)..." Having addressed (παρακαλέσας) the troops in these words Aemilius dismissed them. (*Hist.* 3.108.5–8, 13)

The speech centers on the soldiers' lack of zeal (προθυμία), which prevents the soldiers from going to battle. In this and other speeches in the *Histories* of Polybius,[69] a pattern of παρακλησίς emerges: (1) the speaker addresses soldiers entrenched or on the verge of battle; (2) the speaker notes a lack of zeal or a need for courage; (3) the general reminds his soldiers of a past victories in battle; and, (4) the general promises success and well-being in the future.[70] The lack of zeal and the moving nature of these speeches suggests a strong connection between endurance and apathy: endurance (and the zeal it requires) is the opposite of apathy as well as its deterrent

(ii) Refusing to Shrink Back

In Heb 10, the call to endurance resembles the general's παρακλησίς in Polybius.

[69] See, e.g. Hannibal's exhortation in *Hist.* 3.111.1–9. Hannibal thinks his soldiers are in need of παρακλησίς (3.111.1). He encourages (παρακαλέω) them to good courage and zeal (εὐθαρσής καὶ πρόθυμος) (3.111.5), reminds of their past victories (3.111.6), and makes a promise (ἐπαγγελία) of future success and spoils (3.111.9). Similarly, Flamininus offers a παρακλησίς to his entrenched troops (18.23.1). He reminds them of their past victory (18.23.3–5), demands that they encourage one another (18.23.6), and offers them hope for the future (18.23.7).

[70] Cf. λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως in Heb 13:22. Following Worley and McCown, then, I understand the "word of encouragement" primarily with reference to the epistle's exhortation to endurance. Many interpreters have viewed this reference as a clue to the epistle's genre or literary form. For example, Attridge takes the phrase as a technical term denoting some oratorical performance, namely a "newly minted rhetorical form that actualizes traditional scripture for a community in a non-traditional environment" (Attridge, "Paraenesis in a Homily," 217). While there is much to commend Attridge's article and his attention to the hortatory nature of Hebrews, it may not be necessary to identify the epistle within the genre of paraenetic literature or to suggest a newly developed rhetorical form. Rather than try to identify the form and generic suitability of the λόγος παρακλήσεως, others shift the focus to the nature and significance of exhortation in the epistle.

In obvious ways, Attridge's position builds on that of Wills: Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity." Wills's article prompted the important response of Black, "The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon: A Response to Lawrence Wills." Both Wills and Black are focused on matching the form of Hebrews—specifically the pattern of exempla, conclusion, and exhortation—with one of the styles of ancient rhetoric. Wills suggests that Hebrews, as a sermon, doesn't adhere to any known forms of rhetoric; Black, in contrast, argues for the flexibility of ancient rhetorical forms and the overall correspondence of Hebrews to classical oratory. Übelacker is even more concerned to identify precisely which subtype of hortatory literature Hebrews is, either as παράκλησις ("appeal") or παραίνεσις ("prescription"). See Walter Übelacker, "Paraenesis or Paraclesis—Hebrews as a Test Case," in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (ed. James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pedersen; BZNW 125; Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 319–352. More generally, see Thyen, *Der Stil der jüdisch-hellenistischen Homilie*.

Like Flamininus (see Polybius, *Hist.* 18.23.6), the author challenges the hearers to encourage one another (10:25) and to act as a "stimulus" (παροξυσμός) that will propel them to love and good deeds (10:24).[71] The author warns of the danger of failing to endure (10:26–31), but then reminds the hearer's of their endurance in the past (10:32–34). The exhortation concludes by underscoring the hearers' need to hold fast:

> Therefore, do not abandon your boldness, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance so that, once you have done the will of God, you will obtain the promise. For yet "in a very little while, the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith, and if he should draw back, my soul does not take pleasure in him." But, we do not belong to those who shrink back into destruction, but belong to those who are faithful into the preservation of life. (Heb 10:35–39 [my translation])

These verses add insight into the endurance required of the hearers.

First, the author warns the hearers against abandoning their confidence or boldness (παρρησία). Considering the literary context,[72] the meaning of παρρησία here relates to the hearers' endurance of suffering and hardship.[73] Their "bold commitment" to their way of life, despite the negative consequences that may arise from it, requires endurance. Second, like soldiers commanded to endure an additional battle or to hold the line in front of an opposing army, the endurance of the hearers is motivated by a reward that lies just beyond the hearers (10:36). They will be rewarded, but only if they endure. By doing the will of God—continuing to practice those things that lead to their abuse and suffering—they inherit the promise. Third, the opposite of endurance and maintaining παρρησία is

[71] For an example of mutual exhortation among soldiers, see Polybius, *Hist.* 18.23.6.

[72] The noun παρρησία occurs four times in Hebrews (3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35). In Heb 4:16 and 10:19, the noun relates to the hearers' access to God. They can confidently approach the throne of grace (4:16) and enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus (10:19). The use of the noun in 3:6 and 10:35 is less clear. The context of the occurrence in 10:35, is important. The author reminds the hearers of their experience in the "earlier days" (10:32). This was a time of suffering and struggle, of reproach and affliction in public shaming, of imprisonment and loss of goods (10:32–34). The description of their experience of hardship emphasizes that it occurred in a very public manner. Other interpreters emphasize the public nature of the hearers' suffering summarized in 10:32–34. See, e.g. Attridge, Johnson, and Moffatt *ad loc.*

[73] Lane: "The indignities and deprivation endured in the past are here interpreted as a display of παρρησία" (*Hebrews*, 2:301). Hellenistic philosophers, applying the concept of endurance in battle to the "battleground" of moral formation, frequently connected παρρησία and endurance. The philosopher's open commitment to his particular way of life, for example, often required endurance in the midst of pressures, both external (i.e. reviling, beatings, even exile) and internal (i.e. the appeal of vice, the desire for approbation). See Adamopoulo, "Endurance," 207–9.

"shrinking away" (ὑποστέλλω, 10:38; ὑποστολή, 10:39). Once again, the concept of military endurance is apparent.[74] Faithfulness leads to life, while withdrawing leads ultimately to destruction.[75] The author's exhortation to confident endurance denotes holding the line, standing fast, and refusing to desert; it requires that the hearers remain steadfast in their bold commitment to their gatherings, even if such commitment results in hardships and toil.[76]

(iii) Following God's Voice into the Wilderness

In Heb 11, the list of the faithful exemplifies a form of endurance similar to that of the traveller praised in poetry and philosophy.[77] Faithful endurance requires a radical trust in God's promises and unseen realities (see Heb 11:3), illustrated by Noah's construction of an ark to prepare for events yet to be seen (11:7). Abraham's faithful response, at least as it is retold in Heb 11, emphasizes his endurance as a traveler. He sets out in pursuit of God's

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[74] See, e.g., Plutarch, *Demetr.* 47.4: "Then Demetrius, filled with amazement and alarm at the sudden change of attitude in Seleucus, withdrew (ὑπέστειλε) to the strongest fastnesses of the Taurus..." Similarly, *Arat.* 21; Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 19.29.7; Josephus, *Vita* 215; Dio Cassius, *Hist.* 37.32.3. A similar sense, without the explicit martial overtone, is in Philo, *Mos.* 1.83; *Prov.* 2.10. See also K.H. Rengstorf, "ὑποστέλλω, ὑποστολή," *TDNT* 7:597–99.

The verb also denotes bold public speech "without reserve." See, e.g., Isocrates, *De Pace* 41; *Evag.* 39; *Archid.* 89; Plato, *Apol.* 24B; Demosthenes, *Fals. Leg.* 157, 237, 388; *1 Philip.* 51; *1 Olynth.* 16; Dionysus of Halicarnassus, *Isocr.* 17; Philo, *Fug.* 172; *Her.* 42; *Ios.* 95, 125; *Legat.* 153; *Praem.* 54; Josephus, *J.W.* 1.387; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 11.27; Lucian, *Bis acc.* 11; *Deor. conc.* 2; Dio Cassius, *Hist.* 41.28.1; Libanius, *Orat.* 16.16.

[75] Adamopoulo helpfully connects the relationship between "withdrawing" and destruction: "The army which first 'flees' or abandons their allotted posts or stand in battle, is always described as incurring a devastating defeat in the panic of retreat" (71). The martial context, however, should not be separated from its use in philosophical discourse. Adamopoulo (252) notes the call for endurance in the *Tabula of Cebes* that sounds similar to the call in Heb 10:38–39: "[The two sisters, Self-Control (ἐγκράτεια) and Perseverance (καρτερία)] are encouraging (παρακαλοῦσιν) the ones arriving at this place to be confident (θαρρεῖν) and not to shrink back (μὴ ἀποδειλιᾶν), saying that they must persevere (καρτερῆσαι) yet a little longer, and then they will come to a good path (*Ceb. Tab.* 16.1–3). Text and translation from John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, eds., *The Tabula of Cebes* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983).

[76] Ultimately, the hearers' display of endurance enables their "struggle" (12:1), likens them to Jesus (12:2–3), attests to their divine parentage (12:5–7), and ultimately leads to their formation (12:8–11). For the nature of endurance in Heb 12:1–13, see Croy, *Endurance in Suffering*.

[77] Adamopoulo suggests the concept of the "traveling endurance" originates in Homer: "It is already evident within the earliest extant Greek literary corpus, namely the epic poetry of Homer, that the warrior and the traveller represent the two most recognizable and legitimate paradigms of human heroism...[W]hile the *Iliad* provides us with the first attested European list of heroic warriors, their military exploits, their combats, their hardships, their wounds, their death or their victories, the *Odyssey* records the adventures of a heroic seafarer-traveller involved in another struggle, the dangers and sufferings associated with epic travel...Warrior and traveller face situations of adversity, hardships, pain, fearsome dangers including life and death struggles as an unavoidable consequence of the very nature of their activities, and it is because of the perilous character of their lives that men and bards can bestow upon them epic and heroic stature" (Adamopoulo, “Endurance,” 6–7).

promised future, even though he knew not where he was going. He endured long journeys (11:8–10) and itinerant living (11:9). Similarly, Moses endured ill-treatment (11:25) and abuse (11:26) because he had set his eyes on the promised reward. He too journeyed in response to God's call (11:27) and trusted God's ability to protect him and his people (11:28).

Towards the end of Heb 11, the author provides additional examples of faithful endurance that are more anonymous, but no less powerful (11:33–38). These examples evoke the image of an enduring warrior and what Adamopoulo calls "martrylogical endurance."[78] According to the author of Hebrews, the faithful required endurance to defeat kingdoms and to resist hungry lions; to have courage in war and put armies to flight; to face torture and suffering, mocking and flogging, even imprisonment; to suffer unspeakable deaths and extensive torment; to wander about the face of the earth. If the righteous one lives by faith—if faithfulness is, in other words, a source of life (see 10:38), then the life of faith is far from easy. It is, characteristically, one of physical and mental hardship. The life of faith is, in short, a life that requires endurance.

Hebrews 11, however, does not simply talk *about* endurance; its language is intended to stir the hearers to endurance. In his revised dissertation, Michael Cosby shows how the style of Heb 11 enables the hearers to endure the challenges set before them. He notes, for example, that the failure to "recognize [its] rhetorical techniques is failure to appreciate fully the impact" of the words.[79] The list of the faithful presents an "intensely emotional appeal" that is meant to "instill bravery" in the hearers.[80] Cosby argues that the rhetoric of Heb 11 stirs and grips the hearers, an effect not unlike that of sublime rhetoric discussed above.[81] On the whole, Cosby's analysis provides another example of how the language of Hebrews stirs and provokes the hearers to endure.

[78] Adamopoulo, "Endurance," 196–254.

[79] Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition*, 90.

[80] Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition*, 65.

[81] In his singular reference to *De Sublimitate,* Cosby notes how the Longinus provides "numerous examples of the effective use of language in order to grip an audience" (Cosby, *Rhetorical Composition*, 7n25).

Sluggishness and a Zealous Response

Like other calls to endurance, the hearers' endurance is threatened by the onset of apathy, a lack of zeal, or what the epistle describes as "sluggishness" (νωθρός) in Heb 5:11–6:12. In this passage, the author chastises the hearers for becoming "sluggish" in their hearing (νωθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς) (5:11). Several verses later, he urges them to demonstrate zeal or earnestness (σπουδή) *so that* they might avoid becoming sluggish (ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε).[82] Demonstrating zeal is here presented, not only as the opposite of being sluggish, but also the means of dispelling it. Instead of becoming sluggish, they must become imitators (μιμηταὶ δέ) of those whose faithful perseverance (διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας)[83] made them inheritors of promises (6:11–12), a reference that anticipates the list of the enduring faithful in Heb 11. What, then, is the nature of νωθρός in this passage and how does it relate to the hearers' need for endurance?

To begin to the answer this question, it will be helpful to recall a connection between apathy (ραθυμία) and endurance noted in the section above. Apathy is an active avoidance of hardship; a refusal to do one's duty; and, an unwillingness to make progress. Accordingly, an exhortation to endurance includes (implicitly or explicitly) the avoidance of apathy. Endurance requires that one keep moving, keep making progress; apathy results in the opposite.

(i) The Nature of Sluggishness (νωθρός)

In Heb 5:11–6:12, νωθρός refers to a similar disposition. Νωθρός appears infrequently in the Greek bible; it occurs only in this passage within in the New Testament and only three times in the LXX (Prov 22:29; Sir 4:29; 11:11). In the LXX, the word denotes

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[82] The differences between the two occurrences should be noted. In the first place, the modified "in hearing" is absent in the second occurrence. In addition, the two verses imply different temporal situations: 5:11 indicates a state that started at some point in the past and has extended to the present (ἐπεὶ νωθροὶ γεγόνατε); 6:12, in contrast, suggests some moment not yet realized (ἵνα μή γένησθε).

[83] On the translation "faithful endurance" for πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας, see discussion in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 176. He suggests a hendiadys for two words πίστις and μακροθυμία. He adds that μακροθυμία, the singular occurrence of the word in Hebrews, is "virtually synonymous" here.

inactivity or the opposite of toil.[84] Elsewehere in Greek writings, the word frequently refers to mental obtuseness or slowness in a person's learning or thinking,[85] often in comparison to the reasoning abilities of animals and inanimate objects.[86] But, this is not the only sense of the word. It is used as well in reference to slow moving creatures[87]—a common way of describing snakes.[88] It may denote a general lack of zeal or energy.[89] Like ῥαθυμία, νωθρός has a negative valence, suggesting someone's laziness,[90] carelessness,[91] or inexperience.[92] Likewise, it may be connected with someone's lack of bravery (ἀτολμῶς).[93]

Like ῥαθυμία, it refers to a person's refusal or inability to make progress, particularly in virtue.[94] Epictetus provides an important example, not only because it demonstrates how νωθρός relates to a person's refusal to advance in their learning, but also because νωθρός and ῥαθυμία are used in parallel to one another. In his discourse on

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[84] See, e.g. "Do not become rash with your tongue or sluggish and remiss (νωθρὸς καὶ παρειμένος) in your deeds" (Sir 4:29, NETS). Sir 11:12 is similar. This verse, however, views the inactive or sluggish person favorably, as a special object of God's care in contrast to the person who "foils, struggles, and hurries (κοπιῶν καὶ πονῶν καὶ σπεύδων) but who is not satisfied (Sir 11:11). Prov 22:29 distinguishes between serving before kings and before "slothful men" (NETS), but provides little more to the meaning of νωθρός in context.

[85] Plato, *Theaet.* 144B; Polybius, *Hist.* 3.63.7; 4.60.2–3; 11.25.4; Plutarch, *Soll. an.* 975F; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 12.19, 31; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 1.515; 2.615. Cf. Plutarch, *Cat. Min.* 1.3–5. Plutarch acknowledges that Cato was "sluggish of comprehension and slow (νωθρὸς ἦν ἀναλαβεῖν καὶ βραδύς)" (1.3; LCL: Perrin). Yet, Plutarch cast Cato's slow learning speed in a positive light, suggesting that it makes his learning more deliberate and long-lasting (1.3–5). See LSJ, s.v. νωθρός, I, 2.

[86] Plutarch, *Soll. an.* 963A, B; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Dem.* 54.

[87] A number of things are known for their "sluggish" speed: animals (Aristotle, *Hist. an.* 622b32; [*Physiogn.*] 811b5–10; 811b30; Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 420E); the drone bee (Aristotle, *Hist. an.* 553b11; 624b27); the moon (Plutarch, *Fac.* 928D); a military campaign (Polybius, *Hist.* 3.90.6; Plutarch, *Alex.* 33.6); the birth of a female animal as opposed to a male (Aristotle, *Hist. an.* 584a29). Cf. LSJ, s.v. νωθρός, I.

[88] Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 3.36.5; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 3.6.2; Diogenes Laertius, 4.6; 5.39.

[89] See Aristotle, [*Probl.*] 902a23 (caused by sleep); 954a31; Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 15B; *Phoc.* 4.1; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 1.516; Diogenes Laertius, 4.32. Often, the lack of energy characterizes the onset of old age, often in contrast to youthful vigor (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 2.606; *Gymn.* 46). It may denote a general lack of ambition (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 7.33.1–2; 8.7.32) or a refusal to speak in public (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.23.11–12). It may refer as well to the dull taste of fruit (Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 3.41.3).

[90] Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 8.3–4; Philostratus, *Gymn.* 25, 29;

[91] Polybius, *Hist.* 1.74.13–14.

[92] Polybius, *Hist.* 1.74.2.

[93] Polybius, *Hist.* 4.8.5.

[94] Plutarch, *Lyc.* 18.2 provides an interesting combination of one's lack of zeal toward virtuous living and mental obtuseness. Plutarch describes the education of Spartan boys and the dinner time practice of testing the boys with philosophical questions. Plutarch explains the shame of being unable to answer the question: "For if one of them was asked who was a good citizen, or who an infamous one, and had no answer to make, he was judged to have a torpid spirit, and one that would not aspire to excellence (νωθρᾶς ἐποιοῦντο καὶ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀφιλοτίμου ψυχῆς σημεῖον)" (LCL: Perrin).

using hypothetical arguments, Epictetus traces the difficulties associated with forming, testing, and reforming hypotheses. Near the end of the discourse, he exclaims: "Why are we still indolent and easy-going and sluggish (ἀργοὶ καὶ ῥᾴθυμοι καὶ νωθροί), seeking excuses whereby we may avoid toiling or even late hours, as we try to perfect our own reason (ἐξεργαζόμενοι τὸν αὑτῶν λόγον)?" (*Disc.* 1.7.30; LCL: Oldfather).[95] Epictetus's question—the topic of premises and arguments aside—illustrates how νωθρός amounts to an avoidance of hard work and a lack of zeal to keep making progress.

A similar use of νωθρός appears in Diodorus Siculus, while he is describing Scipio's recent progress in virtue. Scipio took up a philosophical tutor and was "zealous" (ζηλωτὴς γενόμενος) for every virtue (*Hist.* 31.26.5). His recent progress, however, stands in stark contrast to his former sluggish state (νωθρὸς ὢν τὴν ψυχὴν) when he was prone to intemperance (31.26.6). His turn to a virtuous life, moreover, required that he go to battle with his former way of life (ὁ Σκιπίων ὁρμήσας ἐπὶ τὴν ἐναντίαν ἀγωγὴν τοῦ βίου), as if he were battling beasts (31.27.1). Zeal is here presented as the opposite of νωθρός and the means of overcoming it; likewise, the turn to virtue requires endurance, indicated by the agonistic language to describe Scipio's response.

(ii) A Response Lacking Zeal

This brief survey of the use of νωθρός sheds light on the nature of the word in Heb 5–6. Like the above examples, the hearers' sluggishness results from a lack of zeal (σπουδή). By demonstrating their zeal (6:11), they avoid becoming νωθροί (ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε) and imitate those who inherited the promises (6:12). Those who are worthy of imitation, likewise, are the antithesis to the νωθροί; they exemplify the active, demanding, even dangerous nature of seeking after the promises, of responding to God's speech. Νωθρός appears, at least in 6:12, as the opposite of endurance.

[95] The same question appears in Musonius Rufus, *Frag.* 44.

But what about the meaning of the term in 5:11, which has the additional modifying phrase "in hearing" (ταῖς ἀκοαῖς)? There is a tendency to interpret the reference to hearing as a reference to the hearers' mental or spiritual lethargy, not a general form of apathy. The NRSV, for example, translates the phrase "dull in understanding." The NIV reads "you no longer try to understand." James Thompson, in an important article on Heb 5:11–14, insists that νωθρός is "not directed toward lethargy in general." Rather, he suggests the phrase (νωθροί...ταῖς ἀκοαῖς) is a "common expression for mental obtuseness" and thus concludes that the hearers suffer from "intellectual inertia."[96] While the accusation in 5:11 and 6:12 certainly contains a critique of their mental or intellectual disposition, Thompson overstates his case by insisting that it is *only* so.[97]

I suggest, rather, that the phrase ταῖς ἀκοαῖς be understood within the epistle's other references to hearing and its immediate context. First, hearing God's speech in Hebrews is not a matter of the intellect or knowledge alone. Rather, appropriate and effective hearing is active and dynamic. Appropriate hearing is actively on guard against drifting away (2:1–4). It is joined with πίστις (4:2) and propels the hearer to a zealous pursuit of God's promises (σπουδάσωμεν...εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, 4:11). This

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[96] James Thompson, "Hebrews 5:11–14 and Greek *Paideia," in The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982), 29. In my study of νωθρός, I can find only one instance where a phrase similar to νωθρός ταῖς ἀκοαῖς occurs. In Heliodrous, *Aeth.* 5.10, Calasiris says that his hearing has become duller because of his old age (δι' ἡλικίαν νωθρότερος ὢν τὴν ἀκοήν). The context suggests, however, that νωθρός here refers to physical diminishment on account of old age's infirmities, not to mental obtuseness. As noted above, the word νωθρός may itself denote "mental obtuseness," but this is not related to the phrase ταῖς ἀκοαῖς (or similar). Thompson adds three other references that support his notion of the "common expression": Plato, *Theaet.* 144B; Philo, *Her.* 12; and, Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 420E. The example from Plato may denote "mental obtuseness," but intellectual inertia is a stretch; Plato describes those who are initially dull or slow in learning (νωθροί), but whose learning is nevertheless more effective and long-lasting. Plutarch's reference applies not to intellectual inertia *per se*, but to the diminished reasoning capacity of animals, who are hard to move and sluggish (in mind) (δυσκίνητα καὶ νωθρὰ ταῖς ψυχαῖς). The word νωθρός does not appear in Philo's *Her.* 12 (or in the rest of the corpus, so far as I can tell). *Her.* 12 does relate to one's capacity to hear or not hear, but denotes more of a lack of attention than intellectual inertia or moral obtuseness.

[97] Similarly, H. Preisker, "νωθρός," *TDNT* 4:126: "In 5:11 the author tells the readers that he cannot lead them, as he would like, into the profundities of Christian theological *knowledge*. This is because their inward capacity is blunted and dulled" (italics mine). He, like the NRSV and NIV translations, suggests an awkward relationship with 6:12: "The spiritual exhaustion, which is due to deficient confidence of hope in the future time of consummation, makes them νωθροί."

zealous pursuit—an indicator of effective hearing—is not easy, as Heb 11 makes clear. Noah was "warned" about unseen events, he responded reverently (εὐλαβηθεὶς), and he was condemned by the world as a result (11:7). Abraham responded to a "call" in obedience and set out for an unknown place (11:8). He was tested by the command to offer up Isaac (11:17). Those who respond in faith become foreigners on earth (11:13), experience abuse and ill treatment (11:25–26), and persevere the anger of kings (11:27). In short, faithful hearing is heeding the call to zealously pursue God's future, despite the great cost of such a response (not unlike Jesus's own response highlighted in 5:7–11). By extension, then, becoming "sluggish in hearing" applies more to the hearers' *total response* to God's speech than to their mental prowess or intellectual capacity alone.

(iii) Suffering Maturity

Sluggishness (νωθρός), then, relates to a slowness or an unwillingness to experience the hard consequences of hearing and responding to God's speech. As Thompson and other have indicated, the use of education imagery and *topoi* in Heb 5:11–14 is undeniable. But, it is a mistake to link the "sluggishness" of 5:11 too closely to the hearers' immaturity in 5:12–6:3. Or, perhaps more accurately, it is incorrect to think that the hearers' immaturity is only intellectual. Education in Hebrews—the process of moving on to maturity or perfection—is active and often results from suffering. The central example comes just before the passage under consideration.

Hebrews 5:7–10 provides us with a stunning picture of the human Jesus. The author recalls Jesus's struggles and crying out to God, who heard him because of his reverence. Jesus "learned obedience from the things he suffered" (5:8). Not only this, upon learning obedience, Jesus became perfect or mature (τελειωθείς) (5:9). The model for learning and maturity is found in Jesus, who learned obedience and became mature through suffering. Maturity—moving beyond the "elemental principles" (5:12) and the "foundation" (6:1) of

the Christian confession—is not primarily an intellectual activity of acquiring esoteric knowledge, but an active response that leads to pedagogical suffering. Once again, Jesus's life provides the model of this pedagogical suffering in chapter twelve. The endurance of Jesus (12:2) is meant to stimulate the endurance of the hearers (12:3). The result of their enduring the toil and hardship of following in the way of Jesus is their education (εἰς παιδείαν) (12:7). The nature of νωθρός in Heb 5–6, similar to its usage in military and philosophical contexts, represents their unwillingness to endure hardships.

Conclusion

Though more could be said about the passages discussed above, it should be clear that the author presents the problem facing the hearers as the onset of apathy and the need for endurance. As the author presents it, the hearers need a word that will stir them to endurance, shake them from apathy, and move them to faithful living. The onset of apathy threatens to disorient the hearers, to cause them to fall away from that which really matters, from that reality that should orient their lives. It is this moving and stirring nature of sublime rhetoric that makes *De Sublimitate* a welcome conversation partner for exploring not only the style of Heb 12:18-29, but also for considering its function. Hebrews 12:18–29 moves the hearers to the place where God speaks and it stirs them to remain there, regardless of the hardships associated with doing so. Like sublime rhetoric, Hebrews 12:18–29 helps "lift the eyes" of the hearers once again; it orients their attention to what really matters. In this way, the rhetoric of Heb 12:18–29 fosters a new perception of the significance of the hearers' empirical gatherings and enables, albeit through the imagination and language, their participation in reality that lies beyond it.

Epilogue

"And yet the soul in extremity craves language; and even more than that, craves within language some fixed point of perception, some articulation of soul and circumstance that neither wavers nor decays...The task is not to 'believe' in a life beyond this one; the task is to perceive it."[1]

This dissertation opened with a broad consideration of previous attempts to account for the nature and function of the New Testament through ancient rhetorical criticism. It highlighted the difficulty many interpreters have in accounting for the so-called "radical rhetoric" that fills its pages. In the first chapter, I narrowed my focus to Hebrews and Heb 12:18–29 in particular. My initial reading of the passage highlighted the distinctive stylistic features of the text, which have been neglected or undervalued by many interpreters. To better appreciate these features, I adopted an analytical framework provided by *De Sublimitate* because of its emphasis on the powerful effects of sublime rhetoric (chapter 2) and its relative unique perspective on the capacity of language (chapter 3). The remainder of the dissertation explored the style of Heb 12:18–29 (chapter 4) and how elements of style relate to its function (chapter 5). The cumulative result of my analysis, indicated especially in chapter five, is a better understanding of the passage's “spatialized and moved language” and its function within its literary context and within the composition as a whole.

To say that Heb 12:18–29 moves beyond persuasion is to identify one way in which the language of Hebrews offers the "soul in extremity" a "fixed point of perception." Interpreters of Hebrews, often those who use ancient rhetorical theory, have overemphasized the dogmatic or propositional problems facing the hearers and have devalued the physical and social hardships that came with continuing to gather together as a community. Based on the preceding analysis, I find it less likely that the rhetoric of

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[1] Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 127, 169.

Hebrews addresses a lack of belief—about the adequacy of Jesus's sacrifice, about their consciousness of sin, and so forth—than that it satisfies the “cravings” of those who long to perceive a reality beyond their empirical gatherings together. It is a rhetoric primarily directed to the limits of *imagination*, not the danger of dissident teaching.

By extension, it is important to recognize how Hebrews grounds this "point of perception" in the blessings and struggles of the empirical community. It is the hearers' own communal gatherings—the very source of their hardships—that requires the most stretching of their imaginative capacity. This dissertation has focused especially on how the rhetoric of Hebrews invites the hearers to imagine their gatherings together as the location of God's speech. Even as they gather to hear the "word of the Lord" through the voice of their leaders, they are addressed by God's powerful and piercing speech. Hebrews offers additional contours to the significance of their gatherings. It gives them access to the throne of grace. It pulls back the veil of God's true temple, allowing the hearers to witness Jesus's priestly ministry on their behalf. It invites the hearers to imagine their worship being joined to that of the heavenly entourage and it enables their proleptic participation in an unshakable kingdom. Hebrews, through its particular use of language, its appeal to the imagination, and its evocation of emotion, enables the hearers to perceive the unseen—an unseen that neither “wavers nor decays.” It allows the hearers to perceive and inhabit the incommunicable communicated through their gatherings together.

A major implication of this dissertation concerns the relationship between texts and religious experience. In my third chapter, I mentioned Celia Deutsch's study of Philo of Alexandria and her idea that "text-work" can be understood as a form of religious experience. The perspective of *De Sublimitate* on the ecstatic effects of sublime rhetoric offers an additional way to conceive of the relationship between religious texts and religious experience, or what we may call "textually-mediated" religious experience. In the

case of Hebrews, several interpreters have tried to account for the potential for a textually-mediated religious experience in Hebrews by turning to traditions from Jewish mysticism. Based on references to God's throne, angels, and the heavenly Jerusalem (often extracted from Hebrews with little regard for their context or form), interpreters assume strong correlations between Hebrews and the basic orientation and religious practices of *Merkabah* mysticism.[2]

De Sublimitate provides another route to exploring the potential nature of textually-mediated religious experience in Hebrews. In addition to adopting religious language to describe the nature and effects of sublime rhetoric, *De Sublimitate* likens the effects of sublime rhetoric to those of religious experience. Sublime rhetoric, like many forms of religious experience, results in ecstatic effects. It moves human beings closer to the ideal world and the presence of God. Applying the perspective of *De Sublimitate* to Hebrews better accounts for the relationship between the rhetoric of Hebrews and religious experience than do those interpretations that liken it to a nascent form of Jewish mysticism. This is not the place to expand on these differences in detail. Suffice it to say here that viewing the rhetoric of Hebrews as akin to sublime rhetoric focuses attention more squarely on the particular use of language in the composition and the world created by the text, not on the world outside of the text. Like *De Sublimitate*, the powerful, even religious effects of Hebrews arise not from a system or method (whether through philosophy or mystical practices) but from the potential of language itself.

[2] See Barnard, *Mysticism of Hebrews*. Barnard builds on earlier studies, including: H-H Schenke, "Erwägungen zum Rätsel des Hebräerbriefes," in *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz* (ed. H.D. Betz and L. Schottroff; Tübingen: Mohr, 1973) 421–437; Ronald Williamson, "The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *ExpTim* (1976): 232-237; Williamson, "The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews." See also Jody A. Barnard, "Ronald Williamson and the Background of Hebrews," *ExpTim* 124 (2013): 469-479.

Appendix:
De Sublimitate and the Sublime

"Once the sublime had taken root, nobody paid attention to Longinus."[1]

The reception of *De Sublimitate* is marked by rediscovery, reinterpretation, and eventual neglect.[2] While the concept of the sublime has become a complex, multi-faceted subject of interest to historians, philosophers, art historians, and literary critics, much of contemporary reflection on the sublime reveals little or no engagement with *De Sublimitate*. Many recent treatments of the sublime owe more to the thinking of Immauel Kant than to the perspectives of Longinus.[3] Even studies that provide a comprehensive introduction to the sublime offer only a few pages to the "ancient sublime," often reducing Longinus's treatise to a single idea or perspective.[4]

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[1] Mary Mothersill, "Sublime," in *A Companion to Aesthetics* (ed. Stephen Davies *et al.*; Chichester, U.K./Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 548.

[2] For an overview of the reception of *De Sublimitate*, see Elizabeth Nitchie, "Longinus and Later Literary Criticism (Concluded)," *CW* (1934): 121–126, 129–135.

[3] See Timothy M. Costelloe, "The Sublime: A Short Introduction to a Long History," in *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (ed. Timothy M. Costelloe; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7: "As the [eighteenth-century] progressed the terms became interchangeable and, in the wake of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), and cemented by Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1792), the Longinian sublime all but disappeared."

[4] Despite their inattention to Longinus's treatise, there are several very helpful introductions to the concept of the sublime. The classic study, still definitive in many ways, is Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1960 [1935]). See more recently, Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Robert Doran, *Theory of the Sublime*. Both Brady and Doran devote significant attention to the sublime in Kant. As mentioned above, Doran's contribution is unique insofar as he attempts to show a "theory of sublimity" in Longinus that significantly shapes subsequent thought on the sublime. See also Timothy M. Costelloe, ed., *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For discussion of more recent formulations of the sublime, see the helpful overview in Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006); see also James Kirwan, *Sublimity: The Non-Rational and the Irrational in the History of Aesthetics* (New York; London: Routledge, 2005); Tsang Lap-Chuen, *The Sublime: Groundwork towards a Theory* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1998). For the sublime in Kant, see Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1989); Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994); Clayton Crockett, *A Theology of the Sublime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001). On the importance of the eighteenth-century for the development of the sublime, see Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, eds., *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For the "religious sublime," see David B Morris, *The Religious Sublime: Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in 18th-Century England* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1972).

The preface to an eighteenth-century English translation of the treatise emphasizes its rediscovery in the sixteenth century: "The Treatise on the Sublime has slept for several ages, covered up in the dust of libraries, till the middle of the sixteenth century…"[5] This rediscovery of *De Sublimitate* may not be as absolute as the quotation suggests. Rather, the "rediscovery" is more likely an increased appreciation for the unique perspective of Longinus, which likely had been combined previously with the perspective of other Hellenistic and Roman rhetorical and literary critics.[6]

Initially, Christian literary critics found in Longinus a profound explication of "sacred rhetoric," which they found preeminently in the Bible. Eventually, however, the treatise enabled critics to undertake a wider comparative enterprise with non-biblical texts. Thus, *De Sublimitate* provided an impetus for wider literary and aesthetic reflection. Subsequent theorists reinterpreted the perspective of the treatise in short time, however. Though far from exhaustive, the analysis below traces those elements of Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric that are lost in subsequent theories of the sublime, how they are lost, and why it is important to understand how these theories of the sublime resemble *and* differ from Longinus's notion of sublime rhetoric.

Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux: Locating the Sublime in Discourse

Although there were earlier translations of *De Sublimitate,* the most important translation was that of Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux.[7] Boileau's French translation marks a significant moment in the reception of the treatise because it signals a major shift in the

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[5] Quoted in the preface of William Smith, *Dionysius Longinus on the Sublime: Translated from the Greek, with Notes and Observations and Some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author* (London: J. Watts, 1739). I have worked with the facsimile version found in William Bruce Johnson, ed., *Longinus On the Sublime: The Peri Hupsous in Translations by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1674) and William Smith (1739)* (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1975).

[6] According to Debora Shuger, Medieval and Renaissance notions of the grand style, first Christianized through Augustine, had combined *De Sublimitate* with other Hellenistic and Roman theorists. See Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*. She notes that Renaissance rhetorical theory emphasized "the passion, sublimity, and grandeur of sacred discourse" grounded in the grand style (Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 7).

[7] Boileau published his translation of De Sublimitate into French in 1674 as a part of his *Oeuvres Diverses.* As with William Smith's translation, I have worked with the facsimile version of Boileau's translation found in Johnson, *Longinus On the Sublime*.

treatise's role in literary criticism, aesthetics, and philosophy.[8]

Boileau's translation of the treatise marks its reinterpretation as well, evidenced especially by Boileau's preface.[9] Though others likened Longinus to other proponents of the grand style in Hellenistic and Roman rhetorical theory, Boileau distanced Longinus's "sublime" from the "sublime style" of other theorists:

> ...Longinus was not content, like Aristotle and Hermogenes, to give us precepts entirely dry and stripped of ornaments. He did not want to fall into the defect, of which he reproaches Caecilius, who had—he said—written about the sublime in a base style. In treating the beauty of speech, he employs all of the finesses of speech. Often, he employs the figure about which he is teaching, and in speaking about the sublime, he is himself very sublime.[10]

According to Boileau, Longinus did not feel it necessary to define the sublime ("montrer ce que c'est que Sublime") since Caecilius had already done so in his earlier treatise. Boileau insists that Longinus conceives of the sublime differently:

> It is necessary to know, then, that Longinus does not apply sublime to that which the rhetoricians applied to the sublime style, but rather to that extraordinary and marvelous aspect that strikes in a discourse and that enables a work to elevate, to ravish, to transport. The sublime style always demands grand words, but the sublime may be found in a single thought, in a single figure, in a single turn of phrase. Something may be in the sublime style, but is not yet sublime; that is to say, it has nothing extraordinary or surprising.[11]

Boileau draws a clear distinction between Longinus's sublime and the rhetorician's

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[8] As Samuel Monk points out, "Boileau's translation was the turning point of Longinus's reputation in England and France" (Monk, *The Sublime*, 21). See also the discussion of Boileau in Doran, *Theory of the Sublime*, 97–123.

[9] While there are interesting interpretative decisions throughout his translation, Boileau's preface is of utmost concern for the present analysis because of the way it shapes the reception of the treatise and later developments of the concept of the sublime. For a survey of some of the more important differences between Boileau's translation and those of modern English translations, see Johnson, *Longinus On the Sublime*, "Introduction," xvi–xxii.

[10] My translation. French: "...parce que Longin ne s'est pas contenté, comme Aristote et Hermogene, de nous donner des preceptes tout secs et déponillés d'ornemens. Il n'a pas voulu tomber dans le defaut, qu'il reproche à Ceclius, qui avoit, dit-il, écrit du Sublime en stile bas. En traitant des beautez de l'Elocution, il a emploié toutes les finesses de l'Elocution. Souvent il fait la figure qu'il enseigne, et en parlant du Sublime, il est lui mesme tres-sublime."

[11] My translation. French: "Il faut donc savoir que par Sublime, Longin n'entend pas ce que les Orateurs appellent le Stile Sublime, mais cet extraordinaire et ce merveilleux qui frappe dans le Discours, et que qui fait qu'un Ouvrage enleve, ravit, transporte. Le Stile Sublime veut toûjours de grand mots, mais le Sublime se peut trouver dans une seule pensée, dans une seule figure, dans un seul tour de paroles. Une chose peut estre dans le Stile Sublime et n'estre pourtant pas Sublime; c'est à dire, n'avoir rien d'extraordinaire ni de surprenant."

sublime style. To illustrate this difference, he provides two paraphrases of the creation story in Genesis. The first paraphrase demonstrates the sublime style, but it is not itself sublime. The second paraphrase, which echoes Longinus's own paraphrase of Gen 1 in *Subl.* 9.9, is sublime. The second paraphrase is sublime not because of how it is written, but because of the idea it expresses. The *idea* of God's powerful speech is truly sublime and something divine.[12] Boileau concludes that the "sublime in Longinus means the extraordinary, the surprising, and, as I have translated it, the marvelous in discourse."[13] According to Boileau, the sublime is not a stylistic quality or even a form of discourse; rather, the sublime refers to an idea or concept found *within* discourse. A sublime idea or quality is known especially by its intended effect: it strikes, it elevates, it ravishes, it transports.

In effect, Boileau has reduced Longinus's five sources of sublime rhetoric into a singular emphasis on the quality of thought not dependent upon, nor equivalent to, a style of writing. Samuel Monk notes that for Boileau the sublime "is essentially related to thought, that it is independent of rhetoric, and that it has a strong emotional effect."[14] Boileau's distinction between the sublime and the sublime style significantly influences subsequent theorists. As Monk indicates, this "step away from Longinus" led to an increased distance between the "theories of the sublime" and the Greek critic.[15]

For English literary critics after him, Boileau's translation and reinterpretation of *De Sublimitate* became a primary tool in literary analysis for a number of reasons. In its comparison of authors, it attempted an empirical analysis of the sublime that could be reproduced by modern critics. In its variety of comparative texts, it transcended traditional

[12] French: "Ce tour extraordinaire d'expression qui marque si bien l'obeissance de la Creature aux orâres du Createur est veritablment Sublime et a quelque chose du divin."

[13] My translation. French: "Il faut donc entendre par Sublime dans Longin, l'Extraordinaire, le Surprenant, et comme je l'ay traduit, le Merveilleux dans le Discours."

[14] Monk, *The Sublime*, 35.

[15] Monk, *The Sublime*, 36.

genre-specific approaches. Unlike the formal and at times rigid ideals of early modern poetry, *De Sublimitate* provided a greater emphasis on the emotions and the imagination.[16] Boileau's preface also led to a change in terminology: the sublime came to encompass other terms like "inspiration, enthusiasm, and *je-ne-sais-quoi.*"[17] Finally, Boileau's translation led critics to consider the sublimity of the Bible, not simply because of its divine inspiration, but because of the ideas it conveyed and the manner in which they were conveyed; this shift led as well to bolder reproductions of the Bible's sublimity, for example in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Both the analysis and the imitation of the Bible's sublimity led to what David Morris calls the religious sublime.

John Dennis: The Sublimity of Religion

If Boileau identified the sublime with ideas, John Dennis further restricted the sublime to *religious* ideas alone. As Morris notes, Dennis gave England a "thorough and articulate theory of the religious sublime."[18] His theory of the religious sublime emerges from his comparison of ancient and modern poetry.[19] The ideal poem, whether ancient or modern, must please the reason, the passions, and senses at the same time.[20] Dennis stresses the role of the emotions: the emotions distinguish poetry from prose[21] and they facilitate the two great ends of poetry—to teach and to delight.[22] The use of imagery and the the presence of "sacred objects" increase the emotional force of poetry. A "sacred

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[16] See Morris, *Religious Sublime*, 31–35. The particular interest in Longinus among English critics related to three aspects of the treatise: (1) its description and identification of methods of criticism; (2) its emphasis on the emotions and the imagination; and, (3) the distinction it drew between sublimity and the sublime style (Morris, *Religious Sublime*, 29). For the concept of the sublime among English critics, see Ashfield and de Bolla, *Sublime: A Reader*.

[17] Morris, *Religious Sublime*, 31.

[18] Morris, *Religious Sublime*, 7.

[19] Reflection on the religious sublime appears especially in John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry: A Critical Discourse. In Two Parts* (London: Printed for Rich. Parker, 1701). The religious sublime is *implicit* in much of his writing. Dennis does not analyze *De Sublimitate* directly nor does he reflect explicitly on the concept of the sublime.

[20] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 178.

[21] "Poetry is poetry because it is more passionate and sensual than prose" (Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 46). A note about quotations from Dennis: I have tried to adapt Dennis's writing to modern standards of typography, spelling, capitalization, and grammar.

[22] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 48.

poem" is superior to a profane one, since it is "more susceptible of passion."[23] Ancient poetry excels modern poetry because it is more passionate, imagistic, and above all religious—or sacred—than modern poetry.[24]

Joined to the "true" expression of Christianity,[25] modern poetry can surpass Greek and Roman poetry. As Dennis explains:

> The Christian religion alone can supply a poet with all that is sublime and majestic in reason; all that is either soft or powerful, either engaging or imperious in the passions; and with all the objects that are most admirable to the sense, and consequently most delightful.[26]

Dennis refers to this superior, specifically Christian form of poetry as sublime. Sublime poetry satisfies the reason, the emotions, and the senses at the same time.[27]

Sublime poetry produces *ecstatic* effects similar to those named by Longinus, but again Dennis interprets these in distinctly Christian terms. Faith, hope, and love are Christian emotions that act as a "fiery vehicle" and transport "reason above morality;" they allow reason to soar "to the heaven of heavens."[28] A sublime poem transports the reader "to paradise" where one "converses boldly with immortal beings" and "beholds the gods ascending and descending."[29] In this regard, we might consider much of Heb 12:18–29 as an example of Dennis's "religious sublime."

Sublime poetry also derives power from its presentation of sacred objects and ideas. Toward the end of *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry*, Dennis compares the

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[23] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 49.

[24] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 43–44. Later he recapitulates his argument saying plainly that "those poems among the ancients were always sacred" while those of moderns are "for the most part profane" (65). Further: "Now the passages of the ancient poets which seem to have most religion in them are either addresses by which men approach'd the gods, as invocation, apostrophes, and the like; or those condescensions by which the gods communicated themselves to men as revelations, machines, etc." (78–79).

[25] Dennis's cultural context clearly emerges in this section of *Advancement*. His notion of "true" Christianity, which emphasizes the role of the emotions and revelation, stands in contrast to the reasoned religion of British Deism. See Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 156–57.

[26] "The Christian religion alone can supply a poet with all that is sublime and majestic in reason; all that is either soft or powerful, either engaging or imperious in the passions; and with all the objects that are most admirable to the sense, and consequently most delightful" (Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 177).

[27] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 169.

[28] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 162–63.

[29] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 172.

depiction of God in Greek, Latin, and Christian poems. First, he compares how Homer and Virgil depict Jupiter. Virgil is superior to Homer because Virgil presents Jupiter more forcibly before the eyes of the reader.[30] Next, Dennis compares Virgil's Jupiter with the depiction of God in Psalm 118. Psalm 118 outshines Virgil's Jupiter for a number of reasons: it is more reasonable; it better emphasizes the "amazing effects" that accompany God's wrath; it is more complete; and, above all, it "raises the passions" more strongly.[31]

John Dennis's religious sublime plays a transitional role in the conceptualization of the sublime. On one hand, his theory emerges from Boileau's reinterpretation of Longinus. Dennis adopts Boileau's distinction between sublime thoughts or ideas and sublime style. The sublimity of Christian poetry derives from its religious ideas, not from any particular stylistic quality of its writings. On the other hand, Dennis resembles Longinus as he analyzes the sublime in literary texts through comparison. In subsequent theories of the sublime, comparative literary analysis moves further to the margins. On the whole, Dennis's religious sublime anticipates subsequent theories of the sublime. More so than Boileau, Dennis emphasizes the role of the emotions and the role of the imagination in poetry. The emotions and the imagination play a central role in the next theories of the sublime considered, namely those of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant.

Edmund Burke: The Sublime as Terror

Edmund Burke shifts the focus more completely from the qualities and effects of literature to the analysis of sublime *ideas* and the emotional response they cause.[32] Burke explains, "My inquiry went no further than to the origin of these *ideas*" with a specific focus

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[30] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 181–82.

[31] Dennis, *Advancement and Reformation*, 184–86.

[32] See also the discussion of Burke's theory of the sublime in Brady, *Sublime*, 22–28; Monk, *The Sublime*, 84–100; Shaw, *The Sublime*, 48–71. Scholars are divided as to whether or not Burke's *Inquiry* was published in 1756 or 1757. I follow Monk in accepting 1757 as the date of the first edition (see Monk, *The Sublime*, 85n3). Page references and section references to Burke's *Inquiry* are from the following edition: Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste, and Several Other Additions (*New ed. London: Printed for F.C. and J. Rivington, Otridge and Son, et. al, 1812 [1757]).

on the fact that the sublime and the beautiful arise from "different *things* in nature."[33]

Burke's theory of the sublime arises from his understanding of mental or aesthetic responses to ideas and objects, which he names "taste."[34] Taste relates especially to the experience of pleasure and pain.[35] Terror is one such response, which emerges from the threat of pain or danger. Burke links the experience of terror to the sublime:

> Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.[36]

Terror can lead to the sublime experience, however, only when it is experienced from a safe distance. Burke uses the phrase "delightful horror" to describe this complex response. This "delightful horror" characterizes the experience or affection of Burke's sublime.

Burke identifies as well the sources that bring about the "the affections of the sublime and the beautiful."[37] Burke's list of emotions related to the sublime and objects that lead to an experience of the sublime is expansive. He distinguishes terror from astonishment, which refers to an experience of the sublime caused by nature.[38] Obscurity, power, privation, vastness, and infinity all convey the sublime.[39] Other sources of the sublime include great physical buildings, objects crafted with great difficulty, and magnificent vistas of the natural world.[40] These external stimuli create the *feeling* of terror, which results from a perceived (but not actual) encounter with pain or danger. Burke thinks of these as the *causes* of the sublime.

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[33] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste, and Several Other Additions* (New ed. London: Printed for F.C. and J. Rivington, Otridge and Son, et. al, 1812 [1757]), ix.

[34] "On the whole it appears to me, that what is called taste, in its most general acceptation, is not a simple idea, but is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty, concerning the various relations of these, and concerning the human passions, manners, and actions" (Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 30).

[35] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 47.

[36] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 58. See Burke's summary on pp. 84–87 as well.

[37] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 92.

[38] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 95–96.

[39] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 99–134.

[40] Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 135–55.

Burke's sublime retains some points of correspondence with *De Sublimitate*. Burke considers the sublime in writing but only marginally. He emphasizes that obscurity, not vivid description, produces the feeling of the sublime.[41] Like Longinus, Burke emphasizes the correlation between the sublime and the emotions; but, Burke reduces the plurality of emotions in *De Sublimitate* to the single emotion of terror. As Monk indicates, the focus on emotion in *De Sublimitate* and in Burke serves very different ends:

> The difference between the rhetorical sublime and the pathetic sublime of the early eighteenth-century theorists is largely that in the [rhetorical sublime] emotions have a practical value, to persuade against the will and the reason of the audience, ands in the [pathetic sublime] they are regarded as the source of aesthetic pleasure... When the emotions that the sublime traditionally awakened could be regarded as an end in themselves, rather than as a means to an end, an aesthetic theory was possible.[42]

For Burke, the central area of investigation is not literature or even the effects of literature. Rather, consideration of the sublime is primarily a matter of outlining the mental or psychological basis for certain affections. Burke's sublime pertains primarily to an affection or response in the mind. As a result, he is most interested in identifying and categorizing the ideas and things that cause the affection of the sublime. Burke significantly expands the list of sublime ideas and things. In addition, Burke connects and nearly equates the experience of the sublime and the feeling of terror. The three foci of Burke's sublime—mental experience, identifying sublime objects, and equating the sublime and terror—shape the form of subsequent philosophical and aesthetic theories of the sublime.

Immanuel Kant: The Sublime and the Mind's Infinity

Immanuel Kant[43] presents the sublime in a whole new idiom.[44] Gone are the

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[41] "But as to words; they seem to me to affect us in a manner very different from that in which we are affected by natural objects, or by painting or architecture; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime as any of those, and sometimes a much greater than any of them" (Burke, *The Sublime and Beautiful*, 312)

[42] Monk, *The Sublime*, 84–85 (emphasis added).

[43] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power Judgment* (Paul Guyer; trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1790]).

reflections and comparisons of great moments in the literature of the past. Burke's burgeoning list of external stimuli related to the sublime is replaced with a more abstract and theoretical reflection on the psychological experience of the sublime. Kant grounds his theory of the sublime not in encounters with something outside of the self, as was the case with previous theorists. Rather, Kant's sublime is above all an internalized experience of the mind.

Kant's sublime relates to his understanding of the beautiful. The two are similar in important ways: both please for themselves; both presuppose reflective judgment; and, both express subjective judgments that claim to be universally valid (§23).[45] Yet, the two differ as well: beauty concerns the form of the object while the sublime depends on formlessness; the beautiful emerges from the faculty of understanding while the sublime emerges from the faculty of reason; the pleasure that derives from the beautiful depends on the quality of its representation while the pleasure of the sublime derives from its quantity; the effect of the beautiful is immediately pleasant while that of the sublime is indirect and results from the inhibition of the mind's abilities; the beautiful leads to the pleasures of charm and harmony while the sublime facilitates the negative or mixed pleasure, consisting of both attraction and repulsion that leads to admiration or respect (§23). Paul Guyer explains Kant's distinction as follows:

> He is trying to capture an emotional vibration, a tension between elements of pleasure but also actual displeasure in the experience of the sublime. What he wants to express is that while the pleasure in the beautiful can be thought of as a simple feeling, the pleasure in the sublime must be characterized as a complex feeling which, though on balance pleasurable, includes elements of pain as well.[46]

Kant emphasizes the formlessness of the sublime. Whereas the beautiful is pleasant

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[44] For an overview of Kant's theory of the sublime, see Brady, *Sublime*, 47–89; Monk, *The Sublime*, 1–9; Shaw, *The Sublime*, 72–89.

[45] Elsewhere, Kant calls a subjective judgment that claims universal validity a "subjective universal validity" (see §§6–8).

[46] Paul Guyer, "Kant's Distinction between the Beautiful and the Sublime," *The Review of Metaphysics* (1982): 763.

and almost natural, the formlessness of the sublime unnerves and disrupts:

> We can say no more than that the object serves for the presentation of a sublimity that can be found in the mind; for what is properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though no presentation adequate to them is possible, are provoked and called to mind precisely by this inadequacy, which does allow of sensible presentation. Thus the wide ocean, enraged by storms, cannot be called sublime. Its visage is horrible; and one must already have filled the mind with all sorts of ideas if by means of such an intuition it is to be put in the mood for a feeling which is itself sublime, in that the mind is incited to abandon sensibility and to occupy itself with ideas that contain a higher purposiveness.[47]

The above citation hints at many of the distinctive elements of Kant's notion of the sublime. The quotation underscores that Kant's sublime relates to a reflective or psychological experience, not external stimuli. Kant insists that no "object of the senses is...to be called sublime" (§25). Kant proposes two types of sublime that relate to this supra-sensible cognitive experience.

First, Kant outlines what he calls the mathematical sublime. Kant's mathematical sublime refers to the feeling of satisfaction that results when sense perception is pressed to its limits. For example, an attempt to estimate infinity strains the imagination. The sensible imagination cannot take in infinity in its "absolute totality." The straining of the imagination, however, awakens a "feeling of a supersensible faculty in us." The "enlargement of the imagination" results in a sense of satisfaction rooted in overcoming the mind's initial experience of inadequacy (§25). Kant's mathematical sublime refers to the "faculty of the mind that surpasses every measure of the senses" (§25). Eva Schaper captures Kant's emphasis nicely: "Sublimity resides *in* us, in the powers of the human mind to rise above what threatens to engulf or annihilate us. Natural objects may rightly be called beautiful; but no natural object is as such sublime."[48]

Second, Kant describes the dynamical sublime, which focuses on the relationship between fear and the sublime. The dynamical sublime signals the mind's response to the

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[47] Kant, *Judgment*, §23.

[48] Eva Schaper, "Taste, Sublimity, and Genius," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (ed. Paul Guyer; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 382 (emphasis added).

vast forces of nature. Kant's catalogue of those objects in nature that are overpowering resembles that of Burke: overhanging cliffs, ominous clouds, threatening thunderstorms, erupting volcanoes, raging oceans, and rushing waterfalls (§28). Like Burke, Kant insists that the attractiveness of such objects depends on distance; one can only experience the satisfaction of the dynamical sublime "as long as we find ourselves in safety" (§28).

Again, even with the dynamical sublime, Kant's sublime refers to a cognitive or psychological experience, not to external objects of nature. Like trying to estimate infinity, the irresistible powers of nature accentuate the subject's mental and physical powerlessness. Yet, it is just this sense of powerlessness that stretches the limits of the reasoning faculty. The dynamical sublime awakens the mind to a supersensible faculty, "a capacity for resistance of another kind" (§28). Both types of Kant's sublime relate to realizing the reasoning faculty's full potential: "Something which is sublime serves the subjective end of reason by allowing the imagination to reveal the power of the latter."[49]

Kant differs from Burke here in two important ways. First, Kant does not view nature as sublime in itself. Second, and more importantly, Kant does not associate the emotion of fear with the sublime; rather, he emphasizes how the sublime augments the mind's power:

> [O]ur aesthetic judgment nature (*sic*) is judged as sublime not insofar as it arouses fear, but rather because it calls forth our power...Thus nature is here called sublime merely because it raises the imagination to the point of presenting those cases in which the mind can make palpable to itself the sublimity of its own vocation even over nature.[50]

As with the mathematical sublime, Kant's dynamical sublime refers to a psychological experience in which the imagination is enlarged.

Kant moves the sublime away from external, sensible stimuli and locates it entirely in a cognitive experience. The sublime does not apply to aspects of literature; it is not

[49] Guyer, "Kant's Distinction," 774. Schaper confirms Guyer's observation: "Triumph of reason over imagination rather than an accord between them appears to be responsible for the feeling of the sublime as Kant analyzes it" (Schaper, "Taste, Sublimity, and Genius," 383).

[50] Kant, *Judgment*, §28.

linked to objects in nature or architecture; it is not equated with a certain emotion. Kant's sublime is not an object, but an experience. The sublime awakens in the mind an awareness of its own infinity. An experience of the sublime enables the mind to move beyond the limits of sensible reality or the powers of nature.[51]

Kant also considers the relationship between the sublime and religion. It would seem, Kant allows, that his notion of the sublime is the exact opposite of the sublime in religion. Those stimuli that indicate the irresistible power of nature have signaled God's presence and greatness as well. Thunder, storms, and earthquakes often correspond to a theophany. Kant's suggestion that the sublime enables the mind to transcend such powers may seem foolish, absurd, and even impious. The proper response to such stimuli (and God's presence) is not the elevation of the human mind, but rather "submission, dejection, and a feeling of complete powerlessness." A melancholy, anxious, and dejected response seems to be the "only appropriate conduct in the presence of the Deity" (§28). Kant demurs:

> Only when he is conscious of his upright, God-pleasing disposition do those effects of power serve to awaken in him the idea of the sublimity of this being, insofar as he recognizes in himself a sublimity of disposition suitable to God's will, and is thereby raised above the fear of such effects of nature, which he does not regard as outbursts of God's wrath...In this way alone does religion internally distinguish itself from superstition, the latter not providing a basis in the mind for reverence for the sublime, but only for fear and anxiety before the being of superior power, to whose will the terrified person sees himself as subjected without holding him in great esteem; from which of course nothing can arise but the attempt to curry favor and ingratiate oneself, instead of a religion of the good conduct of life.[52]

Kant here draws on the ancient comparison of superstition and true religion[53] to reconcile the apparent contradiction between his notion of the sublime and religion. The terror,

[51] See, e.g, "Thus sublimity is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become superior to nature within us and thus also to nature outside of us (insofar as it influences us)" (Kant, *Judgment*, §28). In this regard, Heb 12:18–29 may be considered "sublime" in a Kantian sense. Among other effects, the vivid imagery and stirring rhetoric of the passage provide the hearers with access to super-sensible realities that lay beyond their empirical existence.

[52] Kant, *Judgment*, §28. For a helpful overview of Kant's philosophical religion and philosophical theology, see Allen W. Wood, "Rational Theology, Moral Faith, and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (ed. Paul Guyer; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 394–416.

[53] See Plutarch, *De Superstitione*; Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition from the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

anxiety, and nervousness experienced by the superstitious person in the presence of nature's force derive from an inadequate view of God. For the properly religious person, the powerful stimuli in nature signal not God's wrath. Rather, they provide the "basis in the mind for reverence for the sublime." Religion and the sublime are consonant for Kant because the sublime emerges from a "God-pleasing disposition" and ultimately ends with the "good conduct of life."

What, then, is the relationship between Kant's sublime and the treatise *De Sublimitate*? There are significant differences between Kant and Longinus. In the first place, Kant makes no explicit mention of *De Sublimitate*. In addition, his emphasis on the magnitude and power of nature, the unattainability of such features through the senses, and the stretching of the imagination do not appear as ready analogues to Longinus's five sources of the sublime rhetoric. Yet, there are interesting points of connection:

(1) Kant's emphasis on the mind's "supersensible vocation"does evoke Longinus's notion that sublime rhetoric reaches near to the mind of God (*Subl.* 36.1). Likewise, Kant's connecting of the sublime with morality resembles the role of sublime rhetoric in Longinus's discussion with the philosopher about cultural decline (*Subl.* 44).

(2) Kant's sublime and Longinus's sublime rhetoric both result in the decentering of the self. Kant connects the "feeling of the sublime" with the "movement of the mind" that comes about through the mind's judging of an object (§24). This calls to mind the ecstatic effect of sublime rhetoric in *De Sublimitate*. The manner of decentering differs in each, however. For Kant, decentering draws a person further into herself through the faculties of the mind. Kant's sublime abandons sensible judgments and pursues supersensible realities. In contrast, decentering in Longinus draws a person out of herself so that she might

imaginatively inhabit another space temporarily.[54]

Jean-François Lyotard: Presenting the Unpresentable

Postmodern theories on the sublime react to the Kantian sublime.[55] For one of these theorists, Jean-François Lyotard, the sublime is not a feeling, as it is for Burke; nor is it a mental experience pointing to transcendental principles of the mind, as it is for Kant. Rather, Lyotard's sublime refers to an event, especially one that presents the unpresentable. In his essay, "What is Postmodernism?,"[56] Lyotard links the "sublime sentiment"[57] of Kant with the nihilism of Nietzsche.

Lyotard's understanding of the unpresentable in the sublime event relates to modern conceptions of reality. Modernity is driven by the "shattering of belief" and by the discovery of "the 'lack of reality' of reality." A consequence of both impulses of modernity leads to the invention of "other realities."[58] Lyotard likens the "lack of reality" to Kant's "sublime sentiment"—the failure and subsequent expansion of the imagination discussed above. The sublime sentiment arises when the imagination is unable to present an object that it can conceive.[59] Lyotard notes: "We have the Idea of the world (the totality of what is), but we do not have the capacity to show an example of it."[60]

Fundamental to the sublime sentiment, then, is the concept of the unpresentable.

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[54] More so than previous interpreters, Doran sees a much stronger connection between Kant and Longinuns. See Doran, *Theory of the Sublime*, 173–285.

[55] See the helpful overview in the Costelloe volume: David B. Johnson, “The Postmodern Sublime: Presentation and Its Limits,” in *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* (ed. Timothy M. Costelloe; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 118–131. Johnson notes: "The issue of irresolvability, which is central to the way these [postmodern] thinkers conceptualize the sublime, was first and most rigorously analyzed by Kant in the third *Critique*. For this reason, the thinkers of the postmodern sublime focus almost exclusively on Kant's interpretation and reject both pre-Kantian and German Idealist and Romantic discourses of the sublime" (119). See also the treatment of Derrida and Lyotard in Shaw, *The Sublime*, 115–30.

[56] See "Appendix: Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" in Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 71–82.

[57] Lyotard explains that the "real sublime sentiment" is an "intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept" (Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 81).

[58] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 77.

[59] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 78.

[60] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 78.

Those ideas that defy presentation "impart no knowledge about reality (experience)...They can be said to be unpresentable."[61] Modern and postmodern art deal with the unpresentable in different ways. Modern art presents "the fact that the unpresentable exists."[62] But, it indicates the unpresentable "only as the missing contents." In contrast, the postmodern "puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself."[63] For Lyotard, modern art does not produce the "real sublime sentiment" because it retains form, a "recognizable consistency."[64] In contrast, postmodern art "denies the solace of good forms" and hence "searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable."[65]

The postmodern sublime serves as an event that presents the unpresentatable. The sublime event is necessarily indeterminate and unpresentable. Like Kant's understanding of the imagination's limit and expansion, Lyotard's sublime is paradoxical. Lyotard's sublime points to the inability to present the unpresentable and yet the paradoxical need to do so.

Conclusion

Mary Mothersill's pointed observation at the beginning of this appendix has been confirmed by much of the analysis above. Although there are implicit connections between Longinus and subsequent theorists of the sublime, there is little explicit engagement with the treatise. Even in those places where connections can be discerned, they also reveal a growing distance from the treatise. Subsequent theorists frequently adopt a single aspect of *De Sublimitate* in their formulations of the sublime. Boileau reduces the five sources of the Longinus's sublime rhetoric to a consideration of ideas alone. Dennis narrows the category further by reducing the sublime to religious or divine ideas alone. Burke dismantles the

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[61] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 78.
[62] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 78.
[63] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 81.
[64] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 81.
[65] Lyotard, *Analytic of the Sublime*, 81.

sublime from otherworldly ideas and focuses especially on the sublime in nature and in human invention. He shifts the focus from sublime ideas to sublime objects. Even more forcibly, though, he reduces the sublime to a distinct feeling, the "delightful horror," that arises in connection with these objects. Kant disputes the link between external stimuli and the sublime; likewise, he refuses to attribute an experience of the sublime to a feeling or emotion. Rather, the sublime is for Kant a psychological experience that helps the subject appreciate, but never fully realize, the reasoning faculty's supra-sensible abilities. Building on Kant, Lyotard suggests that the sublime experience refers an event whereby the imagination tries to grasp or present the "unpresentable."

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