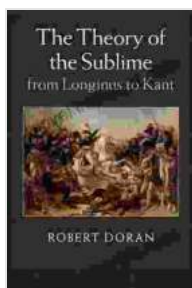


The Sublime: A Journey from Longinus to Kant's Critique of Judgment

The notion of the sublime, a concept associated with grandeur, awe, and the transcendent, has captivated philosophers and thinkers throughout history. This essay will explore the evolution of the theory of the sublime, from its origins in the writings of Longinus to its development in Kant's Critique of Judgment.

Around the 1st century CE, the Greek rhetorician Longinus wrote "On the Sublime," a treatise that established the first theory of the sublime. According to Longinus, the sublime is a characteristic of discourse that elevates and transports its audience. It evokes an emotional response of wonder, astonishment, and admiration.

Longinus identified five key sources of the sublime:



The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant

by Robert Doran

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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File size : 1176 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 323 pages



1. The use of vivid and powerful language

2. The portrayal of grand and awe-inspiring concepts
3. The evocation of strong emotions
4. The use of imaginative and creative devices
5. The revelation of the beauty of the natural world

Longinus's theory of the sublime had a profound influence on Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers. Writers such as Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant further developed and refined the concept.

Burke, in his treatise "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1757), argued that the sublime is not limited to literary discourse but can be found in nature and other experiences. He proposed that the sublime arouses a sense of fear and trembling, which is counterbalanced by a feeling of pleasure and exhilaration.

Kant, in his "Critique of Judgment" (1790), expanded the theory of the sublime to include not only the terrifying and awe-inspiring but also the vast and overwhelming. He argued that the sublime does not originate in the object itself but in the mind of the observer.

Kant's analysis of the sublime is one of the most complex and influential in the history of aesthetics. He proposed that the sublime is experienced in two ways:

1. **The Mathematical Sublime:** This refers to the overwhelming grandeur of the natural world, such as mountains, oceans, and storms. It evokes a sense of awe and insignificance.

2. **The Dynamical Sublime:** This encompasses experiences that are terrifying and threatening, such as earthquakes, avalanches, and wars. It evokes a sense of fear and admiration.

According to Kant, the sublime is not a property of the object but a subjective response that arises when the mind encounters something that exceeds its comprehension. The experience of the sublime is both pleasurable and painful, as it both overwhelms and elevates the individual.

The concept of the sublime has continued to resonate in modern and contemporary art and literature. Artists such as Caspar David Friedrich, J.M.W. Turner, and Mark Rothko have explored the sublime through their depictions of nature's grandeur and power.

In literature, authors such as Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and Emily Dickinson have used the sublime to evoke feelings of terror, awe, and transcendence. The sublime has also played a significant role in the development of romanticism, transcendentalism, and existentialism.

The theory of the sublime has undergone significant development from its origins in Longinus to its refinement by Kant and subsequent thinkers. It encompasses a range of experiences that evoke feelings of awe, wonder, fear, and transcendence. The sublime continues to fascinate and inspire artists, philosophers, and individuals seeking to comprehend the vastness and beauty of the world around them.

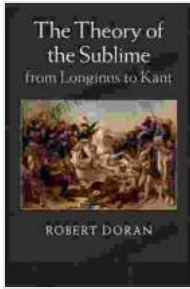
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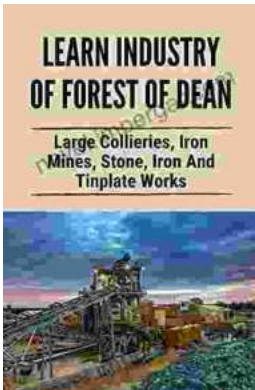
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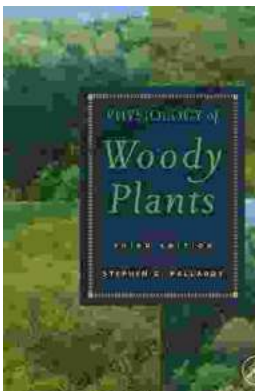


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