THE NATURE OF SAPPHO'S SEIZURE IN FR. 31 LP AS EVIDENCE OF HER INVERSION

IT is proposed to reappraise the nature of Sappho's seizure (2 B = 2 D = 31 LP), to demonstrate that it constitutes proof positive of her lesbianism and to delimit, on the basis of psycho-physiological considerations, the sense any emendation of ἔαγε (v. 9) must have, if it is to match the clinical precision and to fit the rest of the seizure she describes.

Clinically, Sappho's symptoms are not *primarily* manifestations of an ordinary, if extreme, love-sorrow and/or jealousy, but those of an anxiety attack *stricto sensu*, elicited—quite specifically—by the *abnormal* nature of her 'love'. Her poem appears to be the earliest surviving description of an anxiety attack and perhaps even the only one which antedates those of Aischylos.[1] Homeric and Archilochean passages, to which this description is sometimes compared, do not describe anxiety attacks.[2] The verbal similarities are also minimal; Sappho's language is not formulaic but subjective. Most of her symptoms are not mentioned by her supposed 'models'. Worse still, none of her 'models' mentions more than two or three of Sappho's ten symptoms in the same breath. The very limited similarities in question are simply due to the fact that two fundamentally different diseases—be they organic or psychological—may have one or two symptoms in common.[3]

In short, disregarding formulaic similarities (which in this case are negligible), only parallelisms between diagnostically significant *coherent* configurations of *co*-occurring symptoms (= syndromes) (Ps.-Longin. *de sublim.* 10. 1) are psychiatrically significant and only they would permit the philologist to speak of 'models'.

In order to show how otiose the comparing of a single symptom to a Homeric 'model' can be, I will briefly discuss the symptom of sweating. The Homeric corpus mentions sweating 27 times, though *never* as a symptom of anxiety, nor even of any other psychological state. In 24 instances the sweating of both men and animals is due exclusively to a physical effort, though in three of these cases the physical effort (flight) is *motivated* by fear, which, I recall, must not be confused with anxiety (*Il.* 11. 119; 21. 51; 21. 561). The remaining three cases describe sweating caused by a physical trauma: Hektor, smitten and made unconscious, sweats (but also groans) while recovering his senses (*Il.* 15. 241); Diomedes (*Il.* 5. 796) and Eurypylos (*Il.* 11. 811) sweat after being wounded by (almost certainly *poisoned*)[4] arrows. In short, in all 27 Homeric examples, sweating is a purely physiological, and not even remotely a psycho-physiological, reaction.

[1] J. de Romilly (*La crainte et l'angoisse dans le théatre d'Eschyle*, 1958) rightly distinguishes between anxiety and (objective) fear.

[2] Cf. the 'parallels' cited by D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (1959), 29–30; C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*[2] (1961), 188–9, etc.

[3] Fever, diarrhoea, and dehydration occur both in typhoid and in cholera. cf., *infra*, the analysis of fundamental differences between Sappho's and Menelaos' 'silence'.

[4] Pandaros, at least, used poisoned arrows, cf. G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*[4] (1934: paperback is identical with ed. 4), 130. Cf. my comments *infra* on Hor. *Carm.* 1. 22. 3.

This means that, unless one is also prepared to compare Sappho's sweating to that of a cruelly overworked mule (*Il.* 17. 745), the attempt to establish parallelisms between the individual symptoms of Sappho and certain formulaic symptom-'models' found in the Homeric corpus is, at least psychologically, otiose. In discussing Sappho's state one must focus one's attention partly on the *non*-Homeric symptoms she mentions, but, above all, on her abnormal state (syndrome) *as a whole* and on the meaning that syndrome appears to have.

This point can be further clarified by comparing Sappho's reactions to Aischylos' clinically flawless description of Menelaos' stuporous depression, which is manifestly caused by love-sorrow (A. *Ag.* 410–19). Now, though equally exhaustive,[1] these two reactions have only one—and a purely behavioural—'symptom' in common: both Sappho and Menelaos are 'silent'. However, whereas Menelaos' silence is a quasi-voluntary (symptomatic) negativistic mutism, reinforced by the non-agitated, stuporous depressive's characteristic total psycho-motor retardation, Sappho's speechlessness appears to be caused by a transitory psycho-physiological disturbance. Loosely speaking, Menelaos is simply silent, while Sappho's state can almost be compared to a temporary functional aphasia or aphonia. This finding not only proves that two *outwardly* similar symptoms may have nothing in common, but also strongly suggests that, since Menelaos' state results from an extreme reaction to loss of love, Sappho's entirely different state must have some other cause.

This example shows how profitable it is to contrast not symptom with symptom, but total configuration with total configuration, syndrome with syndrome. (See also *infra*, on Phaidra's condition.)

Though I must now diagnose Sappho's seizure, I mention at once that I will show that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, no ancient author viewed Sappho's state as an ordinary, if excessive, grief- and/or jealousy-reaction to loss of love. None compares it to Plato's (allegedly normal) divine madness of love, nor does Plato himself cite this poem. All ancient authors view it, in one way or another, as a seizure, in the clinical sense of that term. This alone suffices to justify a clinical scrutiny of Sappho's state.

I. *Clinical considerations*

All of Sappho's ten symptoms are psycho-physiological; not one word explicitly denotes a purely psychological state, such as sadness. This cannot be accidental, since the simple directness of these verses is universally recognized. The objective character of Sappho's self-observation is best discussed by Page (op. cit. 26–7). Her objectivity is revealing, and, indeed, almost symptomatic. In fact, it is precisely the purely psycho-*physiological* nature of her symptoms—caused by 'somatization', by the transposition of the conceptual components of her conflict to the somatic level—which enables us to observe her bodily reactions so well (see p. 19, n. 2). Her head is clear and her self-perception undimmed, because whatever might blur them is ejected from the *psyche* and relegated to the level of somatic functioning.

[1] That (*pace* Ps.-Longin. *de sublim.* 10. 1) Sappho's enumeration is exhaustive was noted by Page (op. cit. 27). That A. *Ag.* 410–19 is practically an epitome of S. Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', Standard Edn. xiv (1957), 243–58, is shown by G. Devereux, 'L'État dépressif et le rève de Ménélas', *REG* lxxxi (1968) xii–xv.

Sappho describes ten symptoms:

1. Abnormal heartbeat: palpitations, cardiac arrhythmia, etc.
2. A psycho-physiological inhibition of speech.
3. A symptom which affects her tongue; one word of the text being corrupt, I will specify the nature of this symptom further on.
4. A 'hot flash', probably *not* accompanied by flushing (cf. pallor, symptom 8) and perhaps alternating with cold (?) sweat (symptom 7).
5. A sight disturbance, probably of vascular (circulatory) origin[1].
6. A roaring in the ears: tinnitus of a type which resembles the sound of the bull-roarer.
7. Sweating, almost certainly sudden and profuse and very probably cold, suggesting a sudden disturbance of the body's water-retention mechanism and perhaps of its nitrogen balance. This symptom may have alternated with symptom 4: hot flash.
8. Trembling (tremor).
9. Extreme pallor (caused by the constriction of the surface capillaries and by a streaming of the blood toward the inner organs).
10. Fainting: perhaps a syncope, in view of the other circulatory disturbances.

From the neurophysiological point of view, Sappho describes a severe disturbance of the autonomous nervous system and of the cardiovascular system which it governs. From the psychiatric point of view, she describes a perfect, 'text-book case', anxiety attack. This repertoire of *ten* symptoms cannot characterize any other reaction, not even shock caused by (erotic) grief, and this regardless of whether one relies on the *Iliad* (22. 450 ff.) or on a modern medical textbook.[2]

Now, given the availability of excellent 'models' for the description of extreme erotic and jealousy reactions, one must conclude that Sappho described a different reaction—an anxiety attack—because that is what she did experience. It is also significant that, despite the existence of extraordinarily persuasive models for jealousy- and spite-reactions in the poetry of Archilochos, this fragment does not mention jealousy in unmistakable terms (Page, 32–3). As it happens, it is the scrutiny of Sappho's 'jealousy'—*if any*—which will explain why she experienced an anxiety attack, instead of a more common type of reaction to an 'erotic' conflict.

I wholeheartedly concur with Page's (op. cit. 32) deservedly harsh critique of the 'reasoning' by means of which Tietze seeks to prove that Sappho felt no jealousy. Tietze says in effect: 'denn nicht sein kann, was nicht sein darf' and then decides what is permissible. Though the refutation of Tietze's *method of proof* does not prove that Sappho was in fact jealous, I suspect that Page sensed that there was something odd about Sappho's 'jealousy', if any. Having argued elsewhere[3] that nothing is more productive of valid insights than a difficult and controversial point, I propose to analyse the striking and

[1] A. Esser, *Das Antlitz der Blindheit in der Antike*[2] (1961), does not discuss this passage; cf. his discussion of Hdt. 6. 117 (pp. 26–7).

[2] A somatic response almost identical with an anxiety attack can be produced pharmacodynamically, but, as B. Russell (*An Outline to Philosophy* [Meridian paperback edn., 1960], 226 ff.) noted after being given an adrenalin injection: 'I was not actually feeling fear . . . something extra . . . was absent . . . the cognitive part.'

[3] G. Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences* (1967), *passim.*

quite singular manner in which Sappho (vv. 1–4) describes her reactions to her *male* rival. These lines are our only clue to the presence or absence of jealousy and our real clue to the atypical nature of her reactions.

The absence of any explicit reference to jealousy is significant, precisely because jealousy is often accompanied by anxiety, since heterosexual jealousy usually has a marked, albeit sometimes unconscious, *homosexual* (and paranoid) component. The jealous man identifies himself with his unfaithful mate and (usually unconsciously) fantasies that, in cohabiting with the unfaithful woman, his rival perpetrates an indirect (vicarious) homosexual attack against him.[1] Greek and Roman data doubly demonstrate the genuineness of this nexus between jealousy and homosexuality. No (logically more appropriate) heterosexual *lex talionis* obliged the adulterer to surrender his wife (or sister) to the offended husband. Instead, he was subjected to an overt and brutal homosexual and feminizing *counter*-attack.[2] If this fantasy is sufficiently reinforced by latent, residual, homosexual impulses to knock insistently on the doors of the conscious mind, even consciously experienced jealousy will, *additionally*, include some of the symptoms of anxiety. This is only to be expected, since anxiety is the typical reaction of the Ego to the threat of being flooded and overwhelmed by unacceptable ('ego-dystonic') instinctual forces—i.e., in the case of jealousy, by previously well-repressed and well-controlled homosexual impulses.

I have already noted, however, that in this poem the expression of jealousy—if any—is so *indirect* that some critics deny its presence. This is surely noteworthy in a society which openly manifested jealousy and in whose conception of the relationship between mortals and the immortals the 'jealousy of the gods' occupied a central position. In order to clarify this lack of any specific manifestation of jealousy—so labelled—in this passage, and the predominance of anxiety symptoms, I must briefly cite a clinical case.

An analysand, so close to the end of his psychoanalysis as to be, for all practical purposes, normal, was suddenly deserted by his girl-friend. The man reacted to this desertion with extremely intense and prolonged anxiety attacks,[3] but, surprisingly, *felt no jealousy*. His conviction that he had *not* been deserted for the sake of another man seemed realistic and required no analysis. What did require analysis was his conviction that the girl would not even take another lover in the foreseeable future. A scrutiny of this conviction—which seemed puzzling in view of the girl's sensuality—revealed that the patient had sensed—

[1] S. Freud, 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality', Standard Edn. xviii (1955), 221–32. Though in this essay I do not *explicitly* expand Freud's views, I am convinced, on the basis of my own clinical experience (cf. case cited *infra*), that a love-crisis, of any nature whatsoever, elicits *anxiety*, as distinct from grief, anger, etc., only if at least one of the two persons involved has (at least latent) perverted, and preferably homosexual, inclinations. Otherwise stated, even the griefs of a normal love—and, assuredly, its joys as well—are totally free from anxiety (Hor. *Carm.* 1. 22, cf. *infra*), because the participants are not even latently perverted.

[2] Ar. *Nub.* 1083 (and Dover ad loc.); Ar. *Pl.* 168; X. *Mem.* 2. 1. 5; Catull. 15. 19; Val. Max. 6. 1. 13. For further evidence (to which add: (Hor. *Sat.* 1. 2. 4; Apul. *Met.* 12), and for a general theory of sexual 'retaliation', cf. G. Devereux, 'Considérations ethnopsychanalytiques sur la notion de parenté', *L'Homme*, v (1965) 224–47.

[3] These attacks included all of the symptoms mentioned by Sappho and were so intense that tranquillizers (ataractics) could not control them. The patient's internist had to prescribe also quinidine for the palpitations, and injections of male hormone (testosterone) to control sudden, profuse cold sweats.

without becoming conscious of it—that the girl was a latent lesbian, whose heterosexual 'passionateness' was simply a symptom of her flight from her lesbian urges. In discussing the girl's sexual habits, he also realized retroactively that, just before she left him, she had repeatedly tried to manœuvre him into the feminine sexual role, and that these manœuvrings had mobilized certain of his unconscious and severely repressed feminine tendencies. The moment the analyst's interpretations permitted him to obtain this insight, the anxiety attacks ceased literally overnight. They were replaced by ordinary grief and this enabled him to do the long-postponed intra-psychic 'work of mourning' (*Trauerarbeit*, Freud) in the space of about a week and to return to normal, completing his analysis soon afterwards. In short, the absence of *conscious* jealousy and the presence of intense anxiety were due to a realistic, though unconscious, awareness of the girl's masculine-lesbian tendencies and to the fact that these tendencies reactively mobilized certain residual and strongly repudiated feminine (passive-homosexual) traits in his own make-up.[1]

Such data help one to understand not only Sappho's anxiety attack, but also her reaction to her *male* rival for a girl's attention; a reaction markedly different from the jealousy a normally heterosexual woman or man may experience with regard to a rival of the *same* sex. In fact, even if there existed no explicit tradition concerning Sappho's lesbianism, her reaction to her male rival would represent for the psychiatrist prima facie evidence of her perversion. This finding does not imply that she was not *also* a schoolmistress or the leader of some feminine cult group, particularly since, even in our day and age, 'tweedy' games-mistresses and the like are far from rare. What the psychiatric findings prove is that she was not a *heterosexual* school-teacher or cult-leader, while the impartial philologist will, on his part, have to admit that neither Sappho's own writings nor credible tradition explicitly calls her a schoolmistress or a cult-leader.[2] This, however, is a problem of no relevance in the present context.

Our main, and indeed only, clue to whether or not Sappho experienced 'jealousy' is, as said before, the text of the first four lines of the poem, which mentions explicitly only admiration mixed with envy. Is one entitled to read 'jealousy' into these lines, and, if so, precisely what *kind* of 'jealousy'? In a recent paper, which dealt primarily with male homophilia,[3] I cited the content of these lines as evidence of Sappho's lesbianism, pointing out that she

[1] The intrusion of unconscious—and sometimes of conscious—homosexual elements into behaviourally 'heterosexual' acts was well understood by Lucian (*Amor.* 17; cf. Apul. *Met.* 4 *fin.*) and explains *coitus per anum* with women in Greek society (K. J. Dover, 'Eros and Nomos', *Univ. London, Bull. Inst. Cl. Stud.* xi (1964), 31–42; G. Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality', *Symb. Oslo.* xlii (1967), 69–92). A severe neurotic visualized his mistress as a masculine lesbian, and himself as a feminine lesbian (G. Devereux, 'Loss of Identity, Impairment of Relationship, Reading Disability', *Psychoanal. Quart.* xxxv (1966), 18–39).

[2] By contrast, the speculation that she was a prostitute (Sen. *Ep.* 88, etc.) is hardly credible. It does, however, reinforce the view that she was a lesbian: female homosexuality is notoriously common amongst prostitutes (cf. any serious monograph on prostitution). This suggests that the speculation that she was a prostitute is partly a conclusion Didymos drew from her being a lesbian. It would seem desirable, in classical studies, to spend less time on proving that some gossipy tradition is manifestly untenable on *logical* grounds, and to start examining what latent, *psychological* truths such objectively untrustworthy canards contain.

[3] Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality', cited *supra*, n. 1.

identified herself with the man, since she wished she were *in his place*. I now propose to consider this matter more in detail.

A heterosexual woman, whom her man deserts for another woman, may be ragingly jealous and yet not wish to be in her *rival's* place. Moreover, even though her man's desertion may badly undermine her self-esteem ('I was deserted because I am not desirable'), her rival would *not* seem like a goddess to her. A sincere conviction that 'the best man won' may (perhaps) exist on the cricket-field; it assuredly does not exist in *heterosexual* rivalry. The most such a deserted woman might do, would be to try in retaliation to seduce her rival's husband (if she has one), or to win back her man.[1] Even where the jealousy mobilizes *latent* homosexual impulses,[2] the deserted (and predominantly heterosexual) partner would identify herself (or himself) with the deserting partner, rather than with the rival.

This is manifestly *not* what happens in Sappho's case. She does not identify herself with the girl who is now interested in a man, but with her *male* rival. There is nothing paradoxical in this: she could neither envy the girl, nor identify herself with her, *without abandoning her homosexual inclinations and developing heterosexual ones*. Sappho therefore identifies with the man and deems him 'godlike'; moreover, she does so not in a purely formulaic ('Homeric') sense, but in a psychologically authentic manner (Page, 21).

The core of the problem can best be stated in somewhat colloquial terms: 'What does this man—and indeed any man—have that Sappho does *not* have?' 'What can a man offer to a girl that Sappho cannot offer?' The answer, I think, is obvious (*Od.* 11. 249 f.), and leads to a clinically highly documentable and crucial finding: few women are as obsessed with a (neurotic) feeling of anatomical 'incompleteness'—with the clinically commonplace 'female castration complex'[3]—as the masculine lesbian. Moreover, the latter experiences her 'defect' with violent and crushing intensity particularly when her girl-friend is taken away from her not by another lesbian, but by a *man*, who has what she does not have and which she would give her life to have.[4] Indeed, the masculine lesbian tries to negate her 'deficiency' precisely by competing *with men* for the favour of women. Underlying this attitude is a neurotic 'overvaluation' of the phallos, and my clinical experience makes me wonder why the phenomenon of female 'phallic awe' was first described by psychoanalysts not in connection with masculine lesbian patients, but in connection with a normally heterosexual one.[5] In fact, any reader of Hes. *Th.* 200, not so blinkered as to maintain, against all reason, that φιλομμειδής is a distortion of φιλομειδής (when common sense and psychology alike make it

[1] The same is true, *pari passu*, of a deserted heterosexual man.

[2] Freud, 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms', *supra* (p. 20, n. 1).

[3] Not counting Freud's own writings, there are literally dozens of psychoanalytic *clinical* papers dealing with this problem. Cf. G. Devereux, 'The Female Castration Complex', *Amer. Imago*, xvii (1960), 1–19, and, for Greek evidence, Devereux, 'La Naissance d'Aphrodite', in *Echanges et Communications* (*Mélanges Lévi-Strauss*), 1970.

[4] Anyone with some experience of the world has probably witnessed such scenes. One such occurrence was described in detail by the Mohave Indians, cf. G. Devereux, 'Mohave Ethnopsychiatry and Suicide' *Bureau of Amer. Ethnology, Bull.* 175 (1961), 416–25 (Case 105).

[5] P. Greenacre, 'Penis Awe and its Relation to Penis Envy' (in) R. M. Loewenstein (ed.), *Drives, Affects, Behavior*, 1953. By a curious coincidence, the woman patient Greenacre describes was what Sappho was alleged to have been: small, slender, and fairly dark-complexioned (schol. Luc. *Imag.* 18).

obvious that the opposite is true), will take the phenomenon of female 'phallic awe' for granted.[1]

Last but not least, one need not be a clinical psychoanalyst—one only needs some experience of the world—to know that the masculine lesbian whom a male rival deprives of her partner will experience anxiety rather than ordinary jealousy. She may both envy and inordinately admire ('godlike') her fortunate ('properly equipped') male rival and may even go so far as to provoke, invite, or at least make possible a 'heterosexual' intimacy between herself and her rival. In so doing, she may cease to be an *overt* lesbian, but will develop instead strong self-destructive and (directly or vicariously) suicidal impulses. This psychological truth may underlie the factually highly suspect story of Sappho's love for Phaon and of her suicide.[2]

The psychiatric conclusions are fairly obvious:

1. Sappho's peculiar reaction to her rival and her anxiety attack are comprehensible only if, as tradition asserts and as her poems indicate, she was, in fact, a lesbian.

2. If, as seems extremely probable, her remark about the impairment of her tongue was as realistic and precise as are the descriptions of her other symptoms and fitted as perfectly the rest of her syndrome, one can make a fairly good guess at the nature of that symptom, and thereby delimit the meaning any proposed emendation of ἔαγε must have.

It is to this second conclusion that I now propose to turn.

II. *Philological Considerations*

On psycho-physiological grounds it is a well-nigh inescapable conclusion that, during her seizure, Sappho's tongue and mouth were extremely dry[3] and that the little saliva that remained was viscous, causing her tongue to stick against her palate. It is such a 'glueing' of the tongue to the palate, rather than a paralysis of the tongue, which would occur in a state of extreme anxiety. Let us now consider whether ancient paraphrases of this passage, by authors who probably had a correct text before them, confirm this conclusion.

Plutarch twice (*Dem.* 38, *Amor.* 763 a) uses in this context the verb ἴσχω, whose primary meaning appears to be 'to stop' (or, in a broader sense, to inhibit), but whose secondary meaning (*LSJ*, s.v. II) is: 'to hold fast'.

Catullus (51. 9) uses the word 'torpet'. Ordinarily this word denotes a state of rigidity,[4] including even a rigidity induced by an emotion related to, but not

[1] I deal with this word briefly in Devereux, 'La Naissance d'Aphrodite', (*supra* p. 22, n. 3).

[2] The dubious stories about Sappho's life as a prostitute, her switch to heterosexuality, and her suicide rigorously parallel several reliably reported details of the life of the Mohave Indian lesbian witch Sahaykwisā. The latter first prostituted herself to whites, so as to provide well for her successive 'wives', then was raped by the husband of a woman she tried to seduce, and then turned 'heterosexual', but conducted her heterosexual (?) amours in such a manner that she literally *forced* her two lovers to murder her. (The tendency of Mohave witches to force others to murder them—i.e. their vicarious suicide—is an explicit and important part of Mohave witch behaviour.) Cf. Devereux, 'Mohave Ethnopsychiatry', (*supra* p. 22, n. 4).

[3] Even primitives know that in anxiety states the mouth becomes dry. Cf. the judicial practice of causing suspects to stick out their tongues, so that the 'detective' can briefly touch them with a hot iron. The anxious culprit's mouth being dry, he will suffer a slight burn; the moistness of the innocent suspect's mouth will, by contrast, protect him long enough to escape a burn.

[4] Corpora rigentia gelu torpebant, Livy 21. 55. 7.

identical with, anxiety: fear.[1] I therefore concur with Page's (p. 25) reservations regarding the usefulness of Catullus' 'torpet' as a clue to the emendation of ἔαγε.

Ovid's (*Her.* 15. 111) turn of the phrase is, by contrast, more helpful: 'deerat lingua palato'. Though this can and must be taken to mean: '*speech* lacked from my palate', this turn of the phrase is assuredly somewhat bold. The palate is not one of the *main* organs of speech, and I note, for whatever it is worth, that Latin is not particularly rich in either palatals or pre-palatals. Why then drag in the palate, particularly in order to state what it *lacks*? Also, speech is manifestly much more severely impaired when the tongue (organ) is stuck to the palate, than when it is stiff, but separated from it. I am certainly not suggesting that 'deerat' be emended, to make this passage say 'the tongue stuck to the palate'. But I do think that this conjoining of tongue and palate, in *whatever* sense, was inspired by Sappho's text suggesting a glueyness of the tongue, which would necessarily cause it to stick to the *palate*, there being nothing else in the mouth it *could* stick to.

All things considered, Cobet's emendation πέπαγε gives at least an acceptable *sense* and the actual emendation is further reinforced by the occurrence of ἐπάγην in Theokr. *Id.* 2. 110, i.e. just at the end of the verses which imitate Sappho's poem, though, of course, in Theokritos it refers to the rigidity of the whole body. But it is psychologically convincing to assume that a word omitted in the paraphrase from one clause, would reappear, *displaced*, in another clause, not more than a few lines distant from the original clause to which that word initially belonged. This kind of transposition is psychologically somewhat related to the slipping of a gloss into a text one copies. Be that as it may, I cannot think of a better emendation than that proposed by Cobet and hold that any emendation someone else may be able to propose would have to have a roughly similar sense. It, too, would have to suggest the dryness of the tongue (and mouth) and the glueing of the tongue, covered by viscous saliva-remnants, to the palate.

Some of the arguments just marshalled in support of Cobet's emendation imply, at least tangentially, that various ancient authors sensed that Sappho's state was primarily a pathological seizure ('anxiety attack') and only secondarily a manifestation of excessive love, even of excessive lesbian 'love'. I now propose to show that this inference is demonstrably correct, though I do not profess to know whether the ancient authors who quote, paraphrase, or discuss this fragment (or parts thereof) were consciously aware of it, or only sensed it in a dim and yet decisive way. In discussing this matter, I deliberately refrain from exploiting certain facts:

1. I do not view the suddenness (Page, 29) of Sappho's reaction—her reaction at the very moment of perception—as pathological, partly because, psychologically, there would be nothing abnormal even in 'love at first sight', and partly because such 'coup de foudre' reactions are well attested for sexually less inhibited societies than ours.[2]

2. I refrain from insisting on a point which every psychoanalyst takes for

[1] Adeo torpentibus metu qui aderant, ut ne gemitus quidem exaudiretur, Livy 28. 29. 11.

[2] I cite, almost at random, the medieval Malay national prose epic, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, which happens to be available in a German translation by H. Overbeck (2 vols., München, Georg Müller, 1922), and which contains several striking examples of this kind. Of course, Sappho does not experience love, but distress, at first sight.

granted—that (male or female) homosexual 'love' is abnormal, because the libido is contaminated by and fused with aggressivity.[1] Though this is as true of 'illegal' homosexual attractions as of socially sanctioned Greek attractions, I wish to avoid the necessity of demonstrating for the *n*th time that social adjustment and normality have nothing in common and do not even belong to the same universe of discourse.[2] Above all, I do not even need this argument to make my point.

3. Conversely, I do not take advantage of the essentially Platonic—and manifestly erroneous—theory that every love is a kind of madness, though I gladly concede that what *Plato* calls love is, for the clinician quite as much as for the normal, heterosexual man, abnormal in every sense of the word.

In short, though I do not believe in either diagnostic or ethical 'cultural relativism'—which is little better than a kind of nihilism—I will exploit only reactions which both modern psychiatrists and ancient Platonists consider to be abnormal behaviour.

Theokr. *Id.* 2. 106–10 proves that the better is the enemy of the good. It does not improve a fine poem by labouring what was terse and by encumbering a stark and brilliantly simple design with 'gingerbread'. The main point of interest is the reference (v. 110) to a δαγύς: Simaitha compares her state to that of a wax puppet—presumably to one like the puppet she throws into the fire and causes to melt (= 'sweat') (v. 26). This 'anticipation' probably explains why Simaitha mentions only her icy sensations (v. 106), but does not speak of 'hot flashes' (cf., however, vv. 133–4). Moreover, the reference to the coldness of her *body* (ψυχίζομαι) makes it nearly certain that Theokritos felt that Sappho spoke not just of profuse, but specifically of *cold* sweat. This argument is the more convincing as the mention of coldness immediately precedes a reference to Simaitha's sweating *brow*—clearly a Biedermeier attenuation of Sappho's more earthy total sweating. It is hardly necessary to recall that such transpositions of epithets and of nuances are common in nearly every 'Nachdichtung'.[3] What really matters is, however, not Simaitha's love-sorrow and jealousy, but her anxiety, which has manifest homosexual overtones, since she does not know whether her rival is a *girl* or a *boy* (v. 150). Also, her magic-making, though culturally routine, necessarily reflects stress and anxiety and suggests the temporary—and culturally encouraged—'dissolution' of the logical, 'secondary process' type of reasoning, which leads to a 'liberation' of the normally well-controlled illogical 'primary process' reasoning of the unconscious.[4] Indeed, the fact that even primitives resort to 'prelogical' (L. Lévy-Bruhl) thinking and to magic only in situations of stress (entailing anxiety) was already pointed out by Kroeber.[5] Moreover, that such a decompensation and regression did take place

[1] This was discussed in Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality' (*supra* p. 21, n. 1), especially in connection with love in Hades. I profit by this occasion to substantiate further my interpretation of the sense in which Aphrodite is τυμβωρύχος, by referring to Plu. *Amor.* 761 e–f, which states that only Love's commands are obeyed even in Hades, and cites in support of this view the surrendering by Hades of Eurydike, Alkestis, and Protesilaos.

[2] Cf. G. Devereux, *Essais d'ethnopsychiatrie générale* (provisional title) (Paris, 1970, in press); several chapters discuss this problem.

[3] Cf. also the preceding remarks about the 'displacement' of ἐπάγην.

[4] The 'dissolution—liberation' process can also be observed in purely neurological disorders, cf. J. Hughling Jackson, *The Selected Writings* (J. Taylor, ed.), 2 vols., 1931–2.

[5] A. L. Kroeber, 'Psychosis or Social Sanction', (in) *The Nature of Culture* (1952), 310–19.

in Simaitha's case is shown by the reference to the babbling of a sleeping infant (v. 108–9), inserted precisely into the passage which paraphrases Sappho. In a word, Simaitha is not simply amorous, but also conflict- and anxiety-ridden, and Theokritos so describes her in this poem, which paraphrases in part Sappho's famous lines.

Ps.-Longin. *de sublim.* 10. 1 shows that he understood Sappho's reaction to belong to the domain of psychopathology, since he opens his discussion with a demonstration of the internal coherence of the discrete symptoms which constitute a syndrome. Since he leaves no doubt that he does not view Sappho's love as a 'beneficial', Platonic type of madness, the word μανίαις, used in the same passage, should be taken in a strictly psychiatric sense.

Plu. *Dem.* 38. This passage alludes to Sappho's state in connection with a manifestly pathological, quasi-incestuous, erotic madness, which came so close to being fatal that it was treated by the physician Erasistratos: the love-madness of Antiochos for his stepmother Stratonike. The neurotic, anxiety-arousing, oedipal element in this case is so obvious as to require no further discussion.

Plu. *de prof. virt.* 10. 81 d–e deserves careful scrutiny, particularly since it also refers—via a citation of Hom. *Od.* 16. 187[1]—to 'being a god' or 'godlike'. Our key datum is that only vv. 9–10 are cited—the ones which describe the impairment of the tongue and the hot flash[2]—and cited, moreover, with such a disregard of their context, that their true meaning is simply turned upside down.[3] It is not only made to depict a modest, well-bred, and studious youth's reluctance to be called a philosopher, but is explicitly contrasted with the bold ardour of a sexually experienced girl (A. *Tox.* fr. 243 N²). None the less, the real sense of Sappho's poem shows through—for Truth will out!—in what follows. As in *Amat.* 763 e–f, here, too, Plutarch promptly goes on to discuss mystery rites (81 c–d) which, precisely because they operated 'transformations', must have been ecstatic—i.e. neurotic—explosions.[4]

What permits one to draw a conclusion from this passage is precisely that this citation's sense is first turned upside down and is then applied *not* to a happy and normal love (with which, cf. A. *fr.* 243 N², it is actually *contrasted*) but to the very opposite of any psychological disturbance: to the clear-eyed serenity of a thoughtful and modest young gentleman. In short, the very distortion to which Plutarch subjects the meaning of this passage reveals that he well knew that the verses he cited describe two of the symptoms of a severe neurotic disturbance.

Plu. *Amat.* 763 e–f. In 762 b f. we find an enumeration of the great benefits of normal love and of its capacity to improve the lover. Then (762 e), passing *suddenly* to abnormal, homosexual 'love', we are told that the lover, whom his love made fearless enough to brave Thunder itself, becomes cowed (= anxious) in the presence of the beloved *boy*. It is at that juncture that the

[1] The manner in which Plu. *se ips. citra inv. laud.* 12. 543 d cites this verse shows that he contrasts it with sober and sane virtues.

[2] Which Plutarch probably—and mistakenly—thought to imply blushing: cf. his use, a few lines earlier, of the word ἐρυθήματος.

[3] Though Plutarch may have learned this trick from Plato, in his case it reflects only an amiable scholar's compulsion to pepper his text with quotations . . . as a modern philologist peppers his with what M. P. Nilsson rightly calls 'Fussnotennester'. (Et ego!)

[4] I stress that, even though a (psychiatric) katharsis can produce at least palliative results, katharsis presupposes an antecedent pent-up neurotic state, and that katharsis is, itself, a neurotic process.

lesbian poetess's verses are cited. Moreover, her state is not compared to the good and beneficial love mentioned a little earlier, but to divine possession, to a daemonic agitation of the soul, to the Pythia's rapture, to the ἔνθεος state of Kybele's devotees. Now, no matter what Plato may have thought, all these states are abnormal and the last of them demonstrably and verifiably so.[1] Moreover, 762 b f. shows that even Plutarch, Platonist though he was, realized this.[2]

Lucr. 3. 154–6 manifestly refers to a pathological condition and not to 'love'; this makes further comment unnecessary.

Catull. fr. 51[3] suggests in two ways that he understood Sappho's state to be genuinely abnormal. Catullus knew that his love for Lesbia was not normal. Indeed, narcissistic, predatory, and destructively neurotic women like Lesbia, Helen, Manon Lescaut, Carmen, etc.—who are sometimes not even particularly beautiful—do not really appeal either to a man's uncomplicated and (in a good sense) animalistic sensuality, or to the healthy segments of his personality: they mobilize his residual neuroticism and self-destructiveness. Such 'loves' are, clinically, obsessions—one might even say addictions—closely related to, e.g., compulsive gambling (risk-seeking).[4] A man's 'love' for such a woman has much in common with perversion, as I defined perversion elsewhere:[5] its real (unconscious) objective is not gratification but frustration; its mainspring is not sexuality but self-destructiveness; not Aphrodite but the Erinyes preside over such enslavements. It suffices to think here of H. von Kleist's drama, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn.*

The second clue is the poem's aesthetically disappointing ending, in which Catullus simply blames himself for a slothfulness which generates abnormal fancies and destroys kings and cities. It shows that Sappho's state, quite as much as his own, struck Catullus as abnormal, and even as self-destructive. I must particularly insist that extreme slothfulness is a major neurotic symptom: one of Freud's few *basic* criteria of normality is the capacity to work creatively and with pleasure.

Hor. *Carm.* 1. 22 echoes in part Sappho (vv. 23–4), but its affective climate is very different. Instead of identifying himself with Sappho, the Roman poet identifies himself, as any *normal* man would, with her happy rival. Love, which torments Sappho, is a source of tranquil happiness and strength to him, making him safe even from wolves.[6] Secure in his love, the poet needs no weapons,[7] and it is at least of passing interest that the poet specifically mentions that he needs

[1] Laboratory experiments show that 'auditory driving' (drumming first in a rhythm synchronized with the electrical waves of the auditory cortex and then accelerating the beat somewhat) can produce severe seizures, sometimes involving convulsions. Cf. A. Neher, 'A Physiological Explanation of Unusual Behavior in Ceremonies Involving Drums', *Human Biol.* xxxiv (1962), 151–60; id., 'Auditory Driving Observed with Scalp Electrodes in Normal Subjects', *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurology*, xiii (1961), 449–51.

[2] I note, in passing, that Plutarch's wording τῆς ἐρωμένης ἐπιφανείσης is not exactly happy: it is Sappho who 'appears' (arrives on the scene) and not the *seated* beloved girl.

[3] Like Lafaye, I doubt that there is a lacuna between vv. 12–13.

[4] This point is based upon my own clinical experience.

[5] Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality, (*supra* p. 21, n. 1).

[6] This observation is correct; both animals and psychotics attack mainly the fearful and the anxious.

[7] Page, who quite rightly rejects (p. 26) Paton's view that Lalage is an anagram for Agallis, could have pointed out that while Lalage brings happiness, 'Agallis' (?) brings only grief.

no *poisoned* arrows (v. 3): we saw that in the *Iliad* men wounded by poisoned arrows sweat heavily. (Another source of this association of ideas might be the notion that Cupid's arrows inferably carry a subtle poison.)

Ov. *Her.* 16. 83 ('dulce Venus risit') and 218 ff. (Paris watches with distress Helen's and Menelaos' erotic intimacy) also echo Sappho. In addition, Paris, too, envies his happy *rival*, but, being a man, he does not overvalue, but depreciates him. The identification motif reappears also in a rather baroque stratagem. When Helen kisses Hermione, Paris manipulates the *recipient* of the favour he desires into a *giving* role: he takes from Hermione's lips the kiss Helen had put there.[1] This is a curious transformation of one of the homosexual elements of jealousy[2] into a quasi-heterosexual 'indirect' love-making, which has marked incestuous overtones. Indeed, through the naïve mediation of Helen's immature daughter, Helen's maternal kiss is converted into an erotic one. It also hardly need be stressed that an erotic switch from a mother to a daughter—or vice versa—necessarily has erotic-incestuous overtones and therefore elicits anxiety, and this regardless of whether society simply tolerates or actually rewards such a shift of interest.[3]

In short, as in every previously examined instance, in this poem, too, the situation has abnormal, somewhat perverted and *therefore* anxiety-arousing overtones.

It seems unnecessary to examine, one by one and in detail, the few remaining ancient citations not yet considered in this study.[4] Those which have an exploitable context indicate, as did the already discussed examples, that no ancient author was really convinced that Sappho's seizure was a manifestation even of ordinary 'love madness'. Some abnormal, neurotic and/or perverted nuance, which places this seizure well within the field of study of psychopathology, always shows through, in one way or another. Of course, the degree of awareness of these ancient authors is variable. Their insight ranges all the way from Ps.-Longinos' (*de sublim.* 10. 1) specific reference to the significant coherence of the symptoms which constitute a syndrome, to, e.g., the attempt to turn the meaning of a quotation upside down (Plu. *de prof. virt.* 10. 81 d–e), the contrasting of Sappho's state with the serenity of normal love (of which only *normal* people are capable) (Hor. *Carm.* 1. 22); the invention of a neurotic manœuvre (kissing Hermione) inspired by a psychologically similar neurotic nuance in Sappho's account (Ov. *Her.* 16. 255 f.; cf. Ov. *Met.* 6. 477–8),[5] etc.

[1] Cf. Paris' claim that Menelaos is practically throwing Helen into his arms, vv. 304 ff.

[2] The fantasy that the seducer homosexually attacks the cuckold, by cohabiting with the latter's wife, cf. *supra*, p. 20, n. 2.

[3] Towards the end of the last century, some men married—or tried to marry—the daughter of their mistress: S. Freud, 'Psychoanalysis and Telepathy', Standard Edn. xviii (1957), 175–93 and C. Farrère, *La Marche Funèbre* (a novel). American Indians: A. L. Kroeber, 'Stepdaughter Marriage', *Amer. Anthropol.* xlii (1940), 562–70; G. Devereux, 'Atypical and Deviant Mohave Marriages', *Samiksa* (*J. Indian Psycho-Anal. Soc.*) iv (1951), 200–15. On socially rewarded affairs with both mother and daughter: C. v. Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Naked Naga*, 1946. Cf. E. *Hipp.*; Plu. *Dem.* 38, for a different kind of switch (father to son).

[4] Plu. *Quaest. Conv.* 622 c; Max. Tyr. 24. 7; schol. *Il.* 22. 2; Cramer, *Anecd. Oxon.* 1. 208. 15; id., *Anecd. Par.* 1. 39; Ap. Dysc. 333a and 366 marg. Cf. E. Lobel and D. Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, 155, p. 32, etc.

[5] This invention well demonstrates the truth that 'everyone's unconscious perfectly understands everyone else's unconscious' (S. Ferenczi). Much of man's *compulsive* 'rationality' is an unconscious, self-protective defence against such an 'overcommunication', cf. Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method*, (*supra* p. 19, n. 3).

Dissimilarities between Sappho's superbly precise account, and other celebrated accounts of distress triggered by erotic problems, are also of great value for this discussion, albeit in a somewhat different way. They not only confirm the impression that Sappho had *a* seizure of interest to the psychiatrist, but also help one to establish a so-called 'differential diagnosis'.[1] It was already shown that the initially normal Menelaos' severe, reactive, stuporous depression does not have any symptom in common with Sappho's seizure. The same is true of Phaidra's *agitated* depression (E. *Hipp. passim*), which differs completely also from Menelaos' *stuporous* depression, and this despite the fact that Euripides lists about thirty of her symptoms and signs. This *complete* absence of any overlap between Phaidra's and Sappho's symptoms is extremely striking in view of the fact that Phaidra's love, too, is markedly abnormal and because she, herself, comes from a psycho-sexually tainted stock. The only redeeming feature of her love is its *heterosexual* nature. Another difference is equally striking. All of Sappho's symptoms are physiological ones, and, as pointed out before, this 'somatization' of her conflicts permits her to remain clear-headed and to observe herself objectively; her poem does not mention a single disturbance of thought. Even the emotions are not mentioned by name: they can only be inferred from the over-all description of physical symptoms. By contrast, *all* of Phaidra's symptoms are either purely psychological (involving specified disturbances of the thought and of the emotions) or are, so to speak, physical 'extensions'—as *distinct* from somatizations—of her psychological distress, which its physical 'extensions' do *not* suppress. Three short examples will prove this: Phaidra (self-punitively) fasts and starves herself; she is, therefore, not anorexic in the strict sense of the term, nor does she uncontrollably re-vomit what she eats. She is *exhausted*, even physically, only by the violence of her internal struggle, but does not feel paralysed or on the verge of losing consciousness. The pain she feels in her limbs is not a simple 'conversion' symptom, since it does not *substitute* itself for psychological pain, but co-exists with it, as it co-exists with psychological pain also in Archil. *fr.* 84 B = 104 D = 266 Lass.[2] Last, but not least, her thinking is seriously disturbed, as is shown by her indulging in outlandish equestrian, cynegetic, and other fancies, and this explains why, where Sappho *observes* and *describes* objectively, Phaidra *confesses*, reluctantly and in confused torment, the symptoms she experiences. The simple fact is that, though both Sappho and Phaidra experience extreme anxiety, the *mascula Sappho* (Hor. *Ep.* 1. 19. 28) somatizes hers, while the hyper-feminine Phaidra does not—and therefore experiences an agitated depression, rather than a predominantly physiologically slanted classical anxiety attack.

This contrast, together with the contrast between Sappho's and Menelaos' state (*supra*) must suffice here. I cannot, obviously, scrutinize every ancient description of love-sorrow which does *not* draw inspiration from Sappho's poem.

It remains for me to meet two possible objections:

1. The psychologically unsophisticated may argue that some later Greek

[1] This somewhat pleonastic medical term means that the diagnostician not only says 'This person is ill' but specifies the nature of the illness, by differentiating it from similar ones. (Cf. G. Devereux, 'Primitive Psychiatric Diagnosis: A General Theory of the Diagnostic Process', in I. Galdston (ed.), *Man's Image in Medicine and Anthropology* (1963), 337–73.)

[2] This is a decisive reason why Bowra's comparing of this fragment with Sappho's poem is psychologically inadmissible (*Greek Lyric Poetry*, 188, n. 2).

and Roman descriptions of erotic torment also resemble an account of an anxiety attack, even though they are not directly modelled on Sappho's account and even though the love which elicits this anxiety is not *obviously* 'abnormal' (neurotic or perverted). This argument can be met in several ways:

(*a*) Only the specialist in psychopathology can determine the presence of *latent* abnormal elements in a seemingly normal love-crisis, or, rather, in an allegedly 'normal' love. Many such superficially 'normal' loves tend to have a markedly neurotic or perverted unconscious kernel. This abnormal nucleus must be sharply and uncompromisingly differentiated from certain *superficially* regressive (neurotic, perverted) elements which, though present even in a truly normal love, are, in a constructive, creative, and, indeed, almost sublimatory way, incorporated into and made to serve the miracle of a truly mature love. Thus, Andromache's impassioned affirmation that Hektor is father, mother, and brother to her, as well as a stalwart husband (*Il.* 6. 429–30), tells one much less about the oedipal *origins* of a gloriously normal and complete love, than about the miraculous *metamorphosis* of immature oedipality into a mature love. Similarly, the very intensity of Andromache's mad grief (*Il.* 22. 447 ff.) is, in a psychiatric perspective, less a symptom of a reactive emotional disorder (which, of course, all mourning is) than the supreme proof of the normality of the love she mourns. One detail is particularly conclusive: Andromache manifests symptoms of *anxiety* only while she is merely alarmed by a keening whose cause she only suspects. The moment she actually *sees* that Hektor has been slain, her symptoms are those of extreme *grief* only—and this includes her fainting (*Il.* 22. 466 ff.), which is the organism's normal defence against an intolerable shock. Andromache's transition from anxiety and ominous forebodings to overt *normal* grief and mourning is a masterpiece of psychological realism.

(*b*) In some instances second-rate writers simply learned from Sappho, and even more from Aischylos and Euripides, how poignantly effective descriptions of anxiety attacks can be, and obtusely transposed them to descriptions of psychologically normal love-crises. The inappropriateness of such transpositions is as manifest to the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst as the ascription of an impressive (leonine) mane to a bear would be to the zoologist. Such contextually inappropriate anxiety attacks cannot, thus, disprove the foregoing interpretation of the perverted sources of Sappho's anxiety attack.

2. It might be claimed that anxiety manifestations occur in nearly every real or literary love-crisis. This is not denied: most people are simply not mature enough to love like Andromache, just as they are not talented enough to write like Aischylos or like Euripides.[1] Now, though the 'Kinsey Reports' may confuse the normal with the statistically average, neither psychiatrists, nor sensible people, are entitled to do so. Indeed, just as the answer to 'What is authentic poetry?' is 'The *Bakchai*', and not 'The epigrams of the *Anthologia Palatina*' (and this precisely *because* there is but one *Bakchai* but many epigrams), so authentic love is exemplified by that of Andromache and not by that of Lysistrate or of Phryne, for both of whom sex (and love) are means to an end, and not ends in themselves. One should note, above all, that in Greek sources it is, as a rule, the crisis of a paederastic and not of a heterosexual love which elicits symptoms of *anxiety*. This finding speaks for itself.

[1] On the legitimacy of conjoining in this argument love and artistic creativity, cf. E. *Sthen.* fr. 663 N²; Plu. *Amor.* 762 b f.; G. Devereux, 'Art and Mythology: A General Theory', in B. Kaplan (ed.), *Studying Personality Cross-Culturally* (1961), 361–86.

The preceding considerations prove philologically what the earlier pages of this study have already proven psychiatrically:

1. Sappho's seizure is a typical anxiety attack.

2. The occurrence of such an attack, in the situation Sappho describes, is prima facie evidence of her authentic lesbianism.

These findings can neither prove nor disprove that she was *also* a schoolmistress or a cult-leader. If she was either (or both), this would prove no more than that in Lesbos, quite as much as in some modern societies, female inverts tended to gravitate into professions which brought them in close contact with young girls, whose partial segregation and considerable psycho-sexual immaturity—and therefore incomplete differentiatedness[1]—made them willing participants in lesbian experimentation, as a similar undifferentiatedness, reinforced by social encouragement, made well-born Athenian boys ready for paederastic approaches. But even if one assumes the female homo-erotic situation in Lesbos to have been the mirror-image of the male homo-erotic situation in aristocratic Athens, and even if one believes Sappho to have been (incidentally) also a schoolmistress or cult-leader, this does not suffice for her sexual 'Ehrenrettung' and, what is worse, does not contribute to the deepening of one's understanding of her poetry and psychology. This makes any recourse to such unattested and undocumentable 'explanations' otiose. Newton's maxim, '*Hypotheses non fingo*', is nowhere more applicable than in situations in which the making of hypotheses does not and cannot achieve its avowed purposes.

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[1] Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality', (*supra* p. 21, n. 1).