

SOME NEGLECTED ASPECTS OF LOVE
IN SAPPHO'S FR. 31 LP.

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I

Modern interpreters of Sappho's fragment 31 in Lobel-Page's edition may be divided into two main groups: there are those who see in the κῆνος ὄνηε a personal rival of Sappho and argue that she is jealous of the man¹⁾, and those who reject jealousy and say that the poem expresses Sappho's love for the girl²⁾. Textual difficulties would seem to account for this, but added to them are certain preconceived notions concerning the nature of Sapphic love: both groups of interpreters share, basically, the same belief of old: Sappho, to put it bluntly, gives expression to her homosexual feelings. As a result the poem has never, in my opinion, been treated fairly. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss additional poetic material³⁾ which sheds light on the poetic situation. Fundamental in this discussion is the legitimate distinction drawn between the poetic "I" and the personal "I". Unless we rid our minds of the common fallacy that lyric "I" must, with a few notable exceptions, reflect the poet's private affairs and personal feelings, we cannot possibly hope to arrive at a just and fair interpretation of this fragment or, for that matter, of many a lyric fragment.

But let us first turn to the verses which are thought to

1) Of the most recent exponents of this view is G. Devereux, "The Nature of Sappho's Seizure in Fr. 31 LP as Evidence of her Inversion", *CQ* XXI (1970), 17ff., who follows D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, Oxford 1955, 26ff.

2) See G. M. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody*, Ithaca-London 1974, p. 12, who reiterates the views held by M. Marcovich, "Sappho Fr. 31: Anxiety Attack or Love Declaration?", *CQ* XXII (1972), 19ff., and by G. Wills, "Sappho 31 and Catullus 51", *GRBS* VIII (1967), 167ff. G. A. Privitera's approach is different, "Ambiguità antitesi analogia nel fr. 31 L. P. di Saffo", *QUCC* 8 (1969), 37ff., but not the end-result: "... Saffo amava la ragazza" (p. 69).

3) See my study, *Self-Expression in Early Greek Lyric, Elegiac and Iambic Poetry*, Wiesbaden 1977 (*Palingenesia* XI), p. 74 n. 28.

contain the answer to the question whether Sappho is jealous of the man or declares her love to the girl:

Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
 ἔμμεν' ὄνηρ, ὅττις ἐναντιός τοι
 ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδν φωνεί-
 4 σας ὑπακούει
 καὶ γελάσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
 καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν,
 ὡς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχῃ' ὡς με φώναι-
 8 σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει.

Two major points of ambiguity have been cited in these two stanzas: the application of *ὅττις* in v. 2, and the reference of *τὸ* in v. 5. Now the relative pronoun *ὅστις* is, in its general usage, indefinite, but it may also refer to a definite antecedent⁴), and evidence for the use of *ὅστις* = *ὅς* is more copious than has been assumed⁵). In its present context *ὅττις* refers of course back to *κῆνος ὄνηρ* who is sitting (note the present indicative *ἰσδάνει*, v. 3) opposite and close to the girl. This fact is important. Let us ask if *a certain* man or *any* man could be thus sitting. “Any man who sits opposite you is fortunate”, says Page. But not *any* man (this is the rendering of *ὅττις* in two of the three choices Page gives) could take this privileged position, if it is true, as Page and others agree, that the girl in question is a known individual⁶). Not *any* man could enjoy the company, let us say, of a certain movie star, ballet dancer etc. But *any* man could obviously sit by *a* girl⁷). Page’s third rendering of *ὅττις*, which he accepts as the “most natural” choice, “*That* man, whatever his name may be, who is sitting...”⁸), yields, I am afraid, no better meaning;

4) Cf. Page, *op. cit.* 20; Wills, *op. cit.* 168.

5) See the material quoted by L. Rydbeck, “Sappho’s *φαίνεται μοι κῆνος*”, *Hermes* 97 (1969), 161 ff.

6) That she is well known to the speaker is indicated by the “you”-address (v. 2 and 7), and by the intimacy of the feelings expressed. More on this point below.

7) Page says: “Any man who sits opposite you is fortunate”. I could not verify this usage of *any* with a factual indicative in standard English dictionaries (cf. for instance the *Oxford Engl. Dic.* I, p. 378, s. v. *any*). Page quotes Sappho fr. 16, 3 f., *κῆν' ὅττω τις ἔραται*, which he translates: “*That* thing, whatsoever it may be, of which one is enamoured”. But *ἔραται* may be subjunctive (cf. Rydbeck, p. 165 n. 3) and this verb, assuming it is indicative, expresses a personal, subjunctive, fact as opposed to the objective fact (*ἰσδάνει*) in the fragment under discussion.

8) *Loc. cit.*

in fact it destroys the reality of the poetic situation created by *ἰσθάνει*⁹). A man cannot possibly sit close to one's beloved friend (as the girl is supposed to be) and still be "of no importance", especially when *that* man's privileged position is, as it turns out, not a trivial incident of no serious consequences for the onlooker woman (for Sappho in the view of modern interpreters); he cannot possibly be faceless and nameless, no matter what school grammar tells us about *ὄττις*.

An equivalence of *κῆρος ὄττις* to *κῆρος ὄς*, though literally attested and supported by the context, would, according to Page, "have to be accepted by those who believe that the man is the girl's bridegroom". The implication is obvious. As a matter of fact we do not know who the man really is, but even a bridegroom would not necessarily make the poem an *epithalamium*¹⁰). There are thinkable situations, preceding or following a wedding, in which a man could be seen sitting close to a girl. The occasion could be a private gathering attended by close friends and relatives or even an engagement. Page oversimplifies: "We have no reason to suppose that in Lesbos, at the beginning of the sixth century B.C., a man might not sit opposite a woman and converse with her, whether he loved her or not and whether he was married to her or not"¹¹). But it all depends upon what significance we attach to the sitting scene, and this is a matter of some dispute. The possibilities of a meeting between a decent citizen girl and a man were very limited outside a marriage context, if such possibilities existed at all, for all freedom Aeolian women may have enjoyed.

Once we grasp the reality of the man's presence and its effect upon the girl indicated by her reaction (*γελαισας ἰμέροεν, ἄδν φωνείσας*), it is not difficult to see that *τὸ* refers to this reality, i.e. to the sitting scene¹²), not to the girl's "sweet voice and lovely laughter"¹³). Page rightly criticizes those who say "grammar" and the "archaic style" do not allow us to take *τὸ* beyond the immediately preceding words, but Page concludes indeci-

9) See also Rydbeck's criticism (p. 163).

10) The view of an *epithalamium* has been kicked around, criticized, rejected and even abandoned by original supporters (cf. B. Snell, *Ges. Schr.*, Göttingen 1966, p. 97).

11) *Op. cit.* 32.

12) Cf. W. Ferrari, *Ann. Pisa* ser.ii vol. 7, p. 62; A. Barigazzi, *Atti Milano* 75, p. 412 f.; C. Gallavotti, *RivFC* 20 (1942), 117, and others.

13) Snell, *op. cit.* 78; A. Setti, *St. Ital.* NS 16 (1939), 212 ff.; G. L. Koniaris, *Philol.* 112 (1968), 183, and others.

sively: "There is no certain clue to the correct choice"¹⁴). There are at least three "clues" for the first "choice", i.e. for the τὸ referring to the sitting scene as a whole (whether they are "certain" or not is for the reader to judge): 1) the privileged position of the man, 2) the verb ἐπτόαισεν in v. 7, and 3) the psychosomatic description (vv. 9ff.).

Let us first consider the second "clue". Page's own discussion of ἐπτόαισεν is unsatisfactory. He sees in it a feeling of "distress" or "disturbance" and quotes Sappho fr. 22, v. 14, and Alcaeus fr. 283, v. 3. In the first instance the verb in question describes the effect a woman's fine garment has upon the beholder:

τὰν κάλαν· ἃ γὰρ κατάγωγις αὐτα [ν
ἐπτόαισ' ἴδουσιν, ἔγω δὲ χαίρω.

But this is obviously an entirely different context and sheds very little light, if any at all, on the application of the verb in the fragment under discussion. As for the Alcaeus-passage, the subject of the verb is Eros and there can be no ambiguity. More relevant material should be considered, and Marcovich attempted this task. He concluded: "The stock phrase τό μοι καρδίαν ἐπτόαισεν seems to denote the beginning of a *love passion*"¹⁵). But Marcovich left out major Archaic lyric poets, upon which he should have concentrated, in favor of Hellenistic literature, and even then he selected unambiguous passages in which the subject of the verb in question is either Aphrodite or Eros. This is no positive help. Marcovich has not shown that the girl's "sweet voice and lovely laughter" in the present fragment are equivalent to Aphrodite or Eros¹⁶), or that what follows, i.e. the speaker's psychosomatic reaction, is "no more than a poetic device or hyperbole" to say "I cannot help being in love with you"¹⁷). No other devices or hyperboles of this kind have been cited, and there is doubt that any exist in Greek poetry.

14) *Op. cit.* 22. Wills, *op. cit.* 168, agrees with Page.

15) *Op. cit.* 22f.

16) If Ps. Longinus understands the poem "as a poem of love", he most certainly does not elaborate on the point, as his purpose in quoting it is entirely different (cf. p. 118 *below*), and this testimony cannot, therefore, be used in support of any particular interpretation of the poem. Of course the poem is about love. Who denies it. The question is what aspect or aspects of love is the poem dealing with, who is affected and why.

17) *Op. cit.* 25.

In other fellow lyric poets the verb signifies that someone or something is negatively affected¹⁸); how negatively is shown by the poetic context which is, then, of the utmost importance. In Sappho the verb acquires a negative meaning only if *τό*, its subject, refers to the sitting scene as a whole. The girl's *ἄδν φωνείσας* and *γελαίσας ἰμέροεν* are her response to the man who, we are told, is listening to her very attentively (note, again, the present indicative *ὑπακούει*)¹⁹). This is what crushes the onlooking woman. To say that this response vexes the woman speaker and makes her fall in love with the girl is to deprive the verb (*ἐπτόαισεν*) of its force and the scene of its significance. That the verb is used in a negative sense is further shown by the deathlike reaction of the speaker which cannot be easily dismissed as a device. Devereux's paper, though one-sided and biased, succeeded in underlining this reaction as the key aspect of the poetic situation.

To conclude the discussion of the possible "clues" for the correct reference of *τό*, we must take into consideration the subjunctive *ἴδω* in v. 7. The textual difficulties are known, but there seems to be agreement on one point: this subjunctive is used with *ὡς* in the sense of *ὅταν* without *κε* or *ἄν*, which is rather rare in Greek literature. Now, some interpreters give this subjunctive the meaning of a generalizing iterative effect, completely overlooking the poetic situation: Sappho, we are told, describes "what happens *whenever* she sees the girl"²⁰), and the "onslaught of Sappho's symptoms must have been a *recurrent*, chronic trouble, because the subjunctive *ἴδω* in the clause... denotes the repetition of this chain reaction..."²¹).

This view is not compatible with the concreteness of the

18) See Anacr. fr. 408 P.; Mimn. fr. 5 W., and Anacr. 346 P. (all quoted in my study, n. 3 *above*). See further H. Frisk, *Griech. etym. Wörterb.* II, p. 615, s. v. *πτοέω*: "scheuchen, in Furcht setzen, ängstigen". Marcovich does not quote Frisk.

19) Whether "sweet talking and lovely laughing" "are characteristics of the girl" (Koniaris, *op. cit.* 179), we do not know; they probably were. What is certain, though, (Koniaris overlooks this point) is that we cannot see these "characteristics" in isolation from the present context. It is impossible to say, and idle to speculate, whether this girl would also talk and laugh in this manner if that man were not sitting next to her or if there were another man in his place.

20) Wills, p. 170.

21) Marcovich, p. 21.

situation²²). The poetic happening, the speaker's encounter with the couple, requires a certain timespan whose length depends upon the specific nature of the occasion, imaginary or real. Since there is no indication that she surprised the two or interrupted something, we may safely assume that the sitting scene lasted for some time in the present (*ἰσθάνει, ὑπακούει*) and that it was witnessed by more people. There is no thinkable situation in ancient or, for that matter, modern Greek society involving a young couple and another woman looking at them, and Sappho would not create a situation with no relation to social life. Who would understand it?

Now, if the sitting scene takes place in the presence of more people, my question is this: could the woman speaker look at the girl continuously for as long as the scene lasted? Such an act would be starring – a most embarrassing, offensive and quite unnecessary thing. A present subjunctive (*ὀρώω*), which denotes continuous action, would simply not do. But the speaker could, and probably did, look at the girl *now and again* during the time she was present, and the subjunctive aorist (*ἴδω*), which denotes a snapshot action, was best suitable and the only one available to convey this kind of iteration²³). The woman speaker would of course not express herself in the presence of other people, not even in the presence of the couple alone. She only felt what is described in the poem and intimates her feelings as one would in a very personal letter, visualizing the situation anew.

To support his view of a love declaration Marcovich conveniently but quite unwarrantedly translates *σέ*, v. 7, “at your person (face, figure)”. But the “you” should obviously be taken as pictured in the poetic context, i.e. as sitting next to the man and reacting to his presence, for it is in this light that the “you” is seen by the woman speaker, and it is exactly this “you” that troubles her, not the “you”’s eyes or face about which nothing whatsoever is mentioned or hinted at in the poem. But once the idea of “chronic trouble” dawned, it was pursued further: the girl’s *face* could be seen by Sappho repeatedly in the past, but not the sitting scene; therefore *εἰσίδω* refers to the girl’s beauty, therefore *ἐπτόαισεν* means “beguiled”, therefore the poem is

22) I very much doubt that *Il. XIV 294*, quoted by G. Lanata “Sul linguaggio amoroso di Saffo”, *QUCC* 2 (1966) 76, helps in understanding Sappho at this point.

23) Cf. the formula *ὡς ἂν ἐγὼ εἶπω ... πειθόμεθα* (*Il. B 34, T 26, M 75* etc.).

about Sappho's love for the girl, therefore we are dealing here with a device.

Marcovich quotes a "parallel" from Sappho, fr. 23, vv. 3-6:

ὡς γὰρ ἄν]τιον εἰσίδω σ[ε,
φαίνεται μ' οὐδ'] Ἑρμιόνα τεαύ[τα
ἔμμεναι,] ξάνθαι δ' Ἑλένας σ' εἶσ[κ]ην
οὐδὲν ἄει]κες.

He translates the first line as Page does, "For whenever I look you in the eyes" and sees here "the most natural meaning of the phrase *ὡς γὰρ <ἐς> σ' ἴδω*", which is: "Whenever I look *in the face*"²⁴).

But this "phrase" is not hanging in the air; it belongs to a context like the above line does. The problem is that we do not know much about the context of this "parallel". But first: "in the eyes" is again unwarranted. Since *σέ* is in our text not specified it could refer to a number of things: "When I look at you" (in your fine dress or with your blond hair down or smiling like that etc.). In what sense this "you" is spoken of here seems to be indicated by the reference to Hermione, who may or may not be Helen's daughter, and to Helen herself. But what exactly the speaker (I hesitate to say Sappho) admires in these two women is hard to say (this is presumably assumed by her and the addressee); some idea of the nature of her admiration would seem to be suggested by the epithet "blond-haired".

Sappho can, if she wants to, qualify a "you" or, for that matter, a "her" in terms of specific features of the girl's beauty (fr. 16, 7f.):

τᾶ]ς κε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμαρονχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω.

It is then the girl's "lovely gait" and "bright face" the speaker admires.

But aside from the fact that *σέ* is not clearly defined, the iterative subjunctive is not tied to any concrete situation, unlike the situation in the fragment under discussion where the present indicative is very clearly marked. The application of the key terms *εἰσίδω* and *σέ* is too vague in this fragment to be of any help.

24) *Op. cit.* 22. Cf. also Page, 139.

As already pointed out above the “you” in fr. 31 is not defined in terms of any facial or corporal features; this “you” must be taken with ($\alpha\delta\nu$) *φωνείσας* and *γελαίσας* (*ιμέροεν*), which are circumstantial participles, and must be seen in the light of the concrete, timely fixed, situation (*ισθάνει, ὑπακούει*)²⁵). Each time the woman speaker looks at the girl, i. e. at the “you” as related to the man in the present situation, she feels what she describes in vv. 7-16, and this is a negative emotional disturbance, not a response to love. The negative element is not only implicit in the verb itself (*ἐπτόαισεν*) but also in the described psychosomatic reaction to which *γὰρ* in v. 7 leads. But another interpreter sees here a problematic “circularity”: “This scene stuns me *because* whenever I see it I am stunned”²⁶). Aside from whether “stuns” is the meaning of *ἐπτόαισεν*²⁷), what is “I am stunned”? One cannot possibly take this torturous reaction (7-16) to amount to a mere “stunning” in order to talk about “circularity”. Whatever the purpose, literary or personal, of this lengthy description of the woman’s situation, there is very little doubt on one point: she suffers an emotional breakdown which is not only medically attested as such but- what is more important-it can be paralleled from Greek folk poetry as will be demonstrated below. The man’s position is central; he dominates the poetic situation, even though, understandably enough, no direct reference is made to him after the first stanza²⁸). The man is not a shadow figure. He is, like the girl, very much alive and his presence most effective.

II

The tenor of the fragment we have seems to be the effect which the sitting scene has upon the onlooking woman, not the man or the girl outside the sitting scene-context. Attempts have been made to define the relationship of the man to Sappho (as the woman speaker). Those who emphasize the man’s presence with the girl see in him the rival of Sappho and speak of her

25) For Marcovich however the man is “unimpressed”! But is *ὑπακούει* not sufficient proof of his interest, not to speak of the place he has taken (certainly nobody forced him to sit there) next to the girl?

26) Wills, 170.

27) Cf. p. 100ff. *above*.

28) On *ἴσος θέουσιν* *below*.

jealousy (they premise their interpretation upon the common assumption that the only kind of love Sappho talks about is her love for other women). The weak points of the argument, insofar as there is one, are not few. Page says: "To maintain that Sappho feels no jealousy of the man would be to ignore the certain response of human nature to a situation of the type described..."²⁹). But what precisely is the "situation of the type described"? This is the very problem.

If vv. 7-16 describe the torture of jealousy, as has been assumed³⁰), what literary evidence is there to support such a description of jealousy? "Physical symptoms of emotion" do of course occur elsewhere in lyric poetry and in Homer as has already been noted³¹), but nowhere do such symptoms describe erotic jealousy of any sort. Of course they do not have to, but failure to produce relevant literary material³²) deprives the argument of its basis, whatever may be said about a "certain response of human nature" and the like. But the psychiatrist has recently come to the rescue of the philologist ready to produce "clinical evidence" for the case of a *male* rival. Devereux, as already indicated, considered the poem as the diary of a homosexual patient and not as a piece of literature which it is. And what is worse: Sappho is the patient herself.

Devereux's argument is one-sided. It runs like this: Some A's are B, we have a B, therefore we have an A. But the aetiology of anxiety (A) is so multiple³³) that the fact that homosexuals (B) experience it does not prove anything. The emotional state of the woman speaker is not, in other words, the undisputed proof for the anxiety attack of a homosexual, let alone of Sappho. Heterosexual women too reach, in some cultures, such an emotional state as we shall see presently. There is, further, no proof for a homosexual love in the address to the girl which some found offensive³⁴).

The troublesome *ἴσος θέουσι*³⁵), which Devereux "pushed

29) *Op. cit.* 28.

30) Cf. Ferrarri, *op. cit.* 63; Barigazzi, *op. cit.* 414; G. Perrotta, *Saffo e Pindaro*, Bari 1935, 46ff., and others.

31) Page, *op. cit.* 28, who quotes A. Turyrn, *Stud. Sapph.* 32ff.

32) Nothing helpful can be gained from poor imitations and paraphrases of the poem in Roman and Greek literature in late antiquity.

33) See *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. III, London 1956, p. 106ff.

34) Cf. A. J. Beattie, *Mnem.* IX (1956), 110. On this point *below*.

35) Cf. Wills, *op. cit.* 174ff., with bibliography.

ad absurdum"³⁶), does not prove or even support the case of a male rival. Nor does this formulaic phrase support the view of a love declaration of course. Marcovich says, "From the fact that the gentleman can keep sitting facing the girl, and keep listening too, to her irresistibly charming voice and laughter, Sappho draws the *playful* conclusion that the man must possess some superhuman strength: Sappho herself cannot stand the girl's overwhelming beauty for the moment"³⁷). *Playful* is of course the magic word here, but it should be obvious that not every man needs to possess superhuman power to be able to sit close to a charming girl without losing his head, especially if the man is, as Marcovich tells us elsewhere in his paper, "unimpressed"³⁸)! This phrase is no more than an expression of admiration for the man who thus appears "to be elevated above the standard of ordinary mortals"³⁹), and can be paralleled, as will be seen, from Greek folk poetry.

The undisputed fact is that the woman speaker reaches the point of an emotional breakdown. No literary or clinical material has, so far, shed sufficient light on all possible aspects of this breakdown which we need not minimize unduly by reducing it to a "device" or exaggerate by making one-sided assertions of clinical expertise. If relevant material is not forthcoming from Greek poetry, we may turn to folk song to which monodists, including Sappho, were indebted in various ways⁴⁰). This legitimate source has, as far as I can see, been neglected by modern interpreters and commentators of Sappho, and it is hoped that the material presented here will prove inspiring!

The material in question dates from the more recent Hellenic past⁴¹), but to quote a learned student of Greek folk poetry,

36) Marcovich, 20.

37) *Op. cit.* 27.

38) *Op. cit.* 21 (cf. n. 25 above). If Sappho, on the other hand, cannot resist what the man can, she must be jealous of him, which is precisely what Marcovich denies.

39) Page, *op. cit.* 21.

40) See my study (n. 3 above), p. 79.

41) I was able to collect a number of relevant folk songs (including the ones quoted below) in a recent trip to Greece (May of 1976) which was supported by a research grant from the *Humanities Research Council of Canada* administered by the *Office of Research of Memorial University of Newfoundland*. I am thankful for this support as well as for the help given to me by Greek colleagues, especially by Professor Alke Kyriakidou-Nestora, at the University of Thessalonike, who discussed with me certain aspects of erotic jealousy in folk song.

“Greek poetry... continued to be composed uninterruptedly from the end of the ancient world to the present day”⁴²). Due allowance should have to be made of course for a somewhat shifted emphasis in the use of certain ancient folk song motifs since changes have been taking place in traditional cultural patterns⁴³).

Erotic jealousy, to begin with, is not uncommon in Greek folk song⁴⁴). There is a very old song entitled “The Curse of the Deserted”⁴⁵). The deserted girl feels like a reed plant abandoned in the field: they sow and reap but the reed they do not care for till it is burned down and the field darkens. Her heart is as black as the blackened field. She wants to curse the man, feels sorry for him but in the end she cannot help cursing him (v. 6ff.):

καὶ τῶρα μὲν ἀπαράτησε σὰν καλάμι ἄς τὸν κάμπος
σπέρουον, θερίζουον τὸν καρπὸν κ' ἢ καλάμι ἀπομένει,
βάνουον φωτιά ἄς τὴν καλάμι κὶ ἀπομανοῖζει ὁ κάμπος.
Ἔτσι εἶναι κ' ἢ καρδούλα μου μαύρη, σκοτεινιασμένη.
Θέλω νὰ τὸν καταραστῶ κὶ ὅτι τοῦ μέλλει ἄς πάθῃ.

That the man deserted her for another woman need not be said. This is the dreadful reality for the speaker. Note first that the heart (v. 9) is, as in Sappho, adversely affected: it is black⁴⁶). The simile of the burnt reed plant gives expression, in all simplicity and naivety of folk song, to the feelings of utter despair and devastation⁴⁷). If her emotional condition could be tied to the *here and now* of the specific event the effect would be most

42) C. A. Trypanis, *Medieval and Modern Greek Poetry*, Oxford 1951, p. V.

43) In this context see, for example, D. Demetrakopoulou - Lee, “Greece”, *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (ed. M. Mead), Paris (UNESCO) 1953.

44) Disappointingly enough S. Thompson's study, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Bloomington 1958, s. v. *jealous* and *jealousy*, does not contain relevant information.

45) Quoted by N. G. Politis, *Ἐκλογαὶ ἀπὸ τὰ τραγοῦδια τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ*, Athens 1914, p. 160f., nr. 128 A.

46) In numerous erotic songs the heart is thus pictured-black being the color of death. Cf. n. 69 *below*.

47) In another variation of the theme we read (P. Aravantinos, *Συλλογὴ δημοδῶν ἀσμάτων*, Athens 1880, p. 154f., nr. 228 v. 6f.):

καὶ τῶρα μὲν ἀπαρνήθηκε σὰν καλάμι ἄς τὸ βάλτο,
ὅπου τῆς κόφτουον τὴν κορφή, κ' ἢ καλάμι ἄς πομένει.
(But now I am deserted like a reed in the marsh
whose top is cut off and the stalk remains alone).

powerful and physical symptoms too obvious to an onlooker. Noteworthy is, further, the hostility of the deserted girl towards the man which is manifest in the curse she wants to give him. This is evidently not in Sappho. Yet absence of explicit or implicit feelings of hostility toward the deserting person are not unparalleled in folk song⁴⁸).

In another context the deserted girl pictures the man with her rival and describes her feelings thus: she wants her mother to find out at whose table her man dines while her table remains empty; whose hands give him to drink while her hands tremble; whose eyes look at him while her eyes shed tears; whose lips kiss him while hers crack open; whose heart rejoices while hers sighs:

Σὲ τί τραπέζι τρώει ψωμί, καὶ τὸ δικό μου εἶν' ἄδειο,
 τίνος χερῶνια τὸν κερονᾶν, καὶ τὰ δικά μου τρέμονν,
 τίνος ματάκια τὸν κνιτᾶν, καὶ τὰ δικά μου τρέχουν,
 10 τίνος τὰ χεῖλη τὸν φιλοῦν καὶ τὰ δικά μου σκάζουν,
 τίνος καρδιά τὸν χαίρεται, ἢ δική μου ἀναστενάζει,⁴⁹)

The deserted girl visualizes the following scene: the man is sitting with another woman at her table. She gives him food and drink. Her eyes are on him, she kisses him and rejoices. This scene breaks her heart, and she suffers: she trembles, weeps and sighs. She identifies herself with the other woman and is jealous of her, i. e. of her happiness.

If this girl were to see before her own eyes, as in Sappho, what she only sees with her mind, her psychosomatic reaction would be most powerful. And yet pathological symptoms, like those which Devereux diagnosed for a homosexual Sappho, are not, as already indicated, wanting in this situation of an evidently heterosexual woman⁵⁰).

The first verse of the above quotation, more than the rest of the poem, suggests that the deserted girl worries about losing

48) On this point *below*, 110 ff.

49) Cf. Politis, *op. cit.* p. 161 nr. 128 B v. 7 ff. Note also the variant of the first three verses (Aravantinos, p. 154 f., nr. 228 v. 8 ff.):

Σὲ τί τραπέζι κάθεται, σὸν ποῦ τρώει καὶ πίνει,
 ποιανῆς τὰ χέρια τὸν κεροῦν, καὶ τὰ δικά μου τρέμονν,
 ποιανῆς τὰ μάτια τὸν κνιτᾶν, καὶ τὰ δικά μου κλαῖνε.

50) More of pathological symptoms of love in another song, p. 111 ff. *below*.

a life partner, not a casual acquaintance⁵¹); the situation is very serious. But she seems to have sensed defeat and wants to curse the man (v. 12-14); for (v. 15 f.) who is stabbed and does not bleed, who is robbed of his love and does not sigh?:

*Ποῖόνε βαροῦνε μαχαιριαῖς καὶ γαῖμα δὲ σταλάζει,
τίνος ἀγάπη παίρονυνε καὶ δὲν ἀναστενάζει;*

Feelings of hostility, which may occasionally be suppressed, are *per se* proof of the emotional state of the jealous woman⁵²). But this aspect of erotic jealousy is, as already noted, not apparent in Sappho where the woman does not speak ill of the man or the girl; on the contrary, she has only kind and laudatory words for both of them. But it would not be safe to draw from this evidence the conclusion that there is no jealousy in the poem of Sappho (aside from the question, whom the woman speaker is jealous of). Common in Sappho and in the folk songs quoted so far are psychosomatic reactions of the affected person. The cause of distress and suffering is, in the folk songs, desertion, and the same cause seems to underlie the woman's reaction in Sappho, though it has yet to be established what kind of desertion this might be.

A non-hostile attitude of the deserted woman is evident in a folk song called "The Lovers"⁵³). The girl has taken desertion to heart and falls seriously sick (*βαρναροωσᾶ*, v. 1). Her best girl friends come to comfort her, and one of them sets out, at the request of the deserted girl, to find and bring back the man. She returns only to tell her that the man enjoys the company of other women and is not coming back. Her only reaction to the heart-breaking news is weeping (v. 40); there is no cursing. She then sits by the window, and when she sees him riding down a hill well groomed and towered on horseback (v. 42 ff.) she is filled with wonder and is at a loss how to express her feelings of ad-

51) To share one's table means to live with him in lasting friendship and partnership. Archilochus, fr. 173, v. 2 W., comes to mind: ἄλας τε καὶ τράπεζαν. The phrase was proverbial (cf. *Paroem. Gr.* i. 24, 4, al.), and in the case of Archilochus it was used in connection with a broken betrothal (cf. Dio Chrys. 74.16, ii 198.10 von Arnim).

52) In another song quoted by A. Passow, *Popularia carmina Graeciae recentioris*, Lipsiae 1860, p. 422 nr. 556, the deserted girl is referred to as *χολιασμένη* ("all bile"), and when she is asked why she feels that way she makes an angry reply (v. 5 ff.) to the effect that the man she loves left her for another girl.

53) Cf. Passow, *op. cit.* p. 315 nr. 437.

miration for him (47ff.). She calls him “my diamond sword” (*σπαθί μου διαμαντένιο*, v. 52) and a “green-winged eagle” (*πρασσωπτέρουγ’ αἰτέ*, v. 53).

This interesting song, which is too lengthy to quote here, offers new dimensions to understanding the psychosomatic situation. She still loves the man, which would seem to explain why she expresses no ill feelings towards him. When she sends her girl friend to find him she fears lest she take the man away: *φοβοῦμαι μὴ τὸν πάρης*, v. 15. She does not say, “I fear lest he take you”. She senses, in other words, a hidden danger in the friend’s eagerness to go after the man (v. 13f.); she wants to be groomed for the occasion and even asks her to do the grooming:

*Βράσ’ ἄλοισι καὶ λουῖσέ με, μὲ χτένι χτένισέ με,
Πλέξε μου τὰ μαλλᾶκια μου, νὰ πάω νὰ σοῦ τὸν φέρω.*

She has also previously praised the man (v. 11), and this apparently adds to the uneasiness of the deserted girl, who is however assured that what she fears will not happen (v. 16). Yet let us think for a moment of a situation of the type suggested by the deserted girl (that such a situation exists needs no additional proof): two girl friends become interested in the same man and one of them succeeds, for a number of reasons, in winning him. What would be the reaction of the loser? Does the one word, *φοβοῦμαι*, not hint clearly at the agony of the loser? This possibility will be considered in Sappho’s poem.

Of interest is, further, the praise bestowed upon the man (v. 52f.). He is elevated above ordinary human beings. In v. 11 he is called *ἀγγελομμάτης* (“angel-eyed”), and this is a super-human attribute. A much closer reminiscence of Sappho’s *ἴσος θεοῖσιν* is given however in another song, where a man’s height and gait are compared to those of Saint George:

*Τὸν ἄγιον Γιώργην ἀγαπῶ γιατί ἔχει τ’ ὄνομα σου,
Γιατ’ ἔχει καὶ τὸ μᾶκρος σου καὶ τὴν πορπατησιά σου⁵⁴).*

In “The Lovers” song the girl expresses her feelings of admiration in a direct address to the man (v. 53); in Sappho the man is not directly addressed; only the girl is.

Pathological feelings and physical symptoms of love are best found in the following song⁵⁵:

54) Passow, p. 412 nr. 532f.
55) Passow, p. 411 nr. 532b.

*Νὰ μὴ σὲ βλέπω, δὲν βαστῶ,
 "Ὅταν σὲ βλέπω ἀρρωστῶ·
 Ἐσὺ ᾿σ' ὁ θάνατός μου,
 Ἐσὺ καὶ ὁ γιατρός μου.*
 (Not to see you I cannot endure.
 When I see you I take ill;
 You are my death,
 You are also my healer)

5 *Νὰ σὲ κοιτάζω, ἀγαπῶ,
 Κι' ὅταν σὲ διῶ, καρδιοχτυπῶ,
 Λιγώνειται ἡ καρδιά μου,
 Χάνω τὰ λογικά μου.*
 (I love to look at you,
 But when I see you I palpitate,
 My heart is choking,
 I lose my mind)

10 *"Ἐχω πολλὰ νὰ σοῦ εἰπῶ,
 Κι ὅταν σὲ βλέπω, σιωπῶ,
 Βουβαίνεται καὶ μένει
 Ἡ γλῶσσά μου δεμένη.*
 (Much I want to say to you,
 But when I see you I cannot speak;
 Crippled is my tongue,
 Knotted it remains)

15 *"Ὅταν σὲ βλέπω, λαχταρῶ,
 Καὶ δὲν μπορῶ νὰ σὲ χαρῶ.
 Σὲ βλέπω, τυραννοῦμαι,
 Ἄν δὲν σὲ διῶ, λυποῦμαι.*
 (When I see you I am overcome with desire
 But I cannot have you,
 I look at you, I torture myself;
 If I do not see you I am depressed)

20 *Νὰ σὲ θωρῶ, ἐπιθυμῶ,
 Ἄν δὲν σὲ διῶ, λιγοθυμῶ,
 Σὲ βλέπω, δὲν χορταίνω,
 Ἄν δὲν σὲ διῶ, πεθαίνω.*
 (To see you, I desire;
 If I do not see you I faint,
 I look at you insatiably;
 If I do not see you I will die)

At least five of the ten symptoms listed by the psychiatrist Devereux as evidence for Sappho's homosexual anxiety attack are evident in this love song⁵⁶), and we also note *πεθαίνω* in v. 20 and Sappho's *τεθνάκην* (v. 15). That the feelings expressed concern lovers of opposite sex is certain⁵⁷), though textual evidence is wanting: homosexuality is not a theme of Greek folk song.

This is a passionate, torturing love. But is the anonymous speaker⁵⁸) simply overwhelmed by the beauty of the beloved, about which nothing is said in the song, or is he (or she) facing competition? In the songs quoted previously competition in love is a dreadful reality leading to the desertion of the less qualified rival⁵⁹), which in turn causes jealousy and hatred⁶⁰). The beauty

56) These are (p. 19): 1) "Abnormal heartbeat: palpitations, cardiac arrhythmia, etc." (cf. v. 7 in this song), 2) "A psycho-physiological inhibition of speech" (cf. v. 10f. here), 3) "A symptom which affects her tongue" (cf. v. 12 in this song), 5) "A sight disturbance, probably of vascular (circulatory) origin" (cf. v. 1, v. 6 and v. 15 here), 10) "Fainting: perhaps a syncope, in view of the other circulatory disturbances" (cf. v. 18 in this song). Whether there are actually ten symptoms in Sappho is another question (only some of those listed by Devereux are to be found in Freud's learned discussion of anxiety attacks, *op. cit.* 94ff.), and in any case one cannot talk about poetic symptoms in a clinical sense of the term. Cf. p. 117 f. below.

57) See for example the songs quoted by Passow, *op. cit.* p. 450 nr. 605, p. 423 nr. 558.

58) Folk song is representative without losing its individuality, and has influenced lyric monody. Cf. my study (n. 3 above), p. 87f.

59) The loser feels that she is physically in a disadvantageous position as the following distichs, quoted by N. Kabroulakis, *Oi rízes tōn ríztukon tragoudiōn*, Athens 1967, p. 106, demonstrate:

*Ζηλεύει ἡ χαμηλὴ κορφή νὰ φτάξη τὴ μεγάλη
 ζηλεύει καὶ ἡ ἄσχημη τσὴ ὁμορφῆς τὰ κάλλη.
 Ζηλεύει ἡ χαμηλὴ κορφή νὰ φτάξη τὴν ἀπάνω
 ζηλεύω καὶ στ' ἀντρόνα μάντα μπορῶ νὰ κάμω*
 (As a low treetop is jealous of a higher one
 and tries to catch up with it
 so is the ugly girl jealous of the beautiful one.
 A low treetop is jealous of the one above it
 and tries to catch up with it
 and I am jealous of married couples but what
 can I do!).

60) Freud, *op. cit.* vol. XVIII p. 223, speaks of "competitive or normal" jealousy and describes it thus: "It is easy to see that essentially it is compounded of grief, then pain caused by the thought of losing the love object... further of feelings of enmity against the successful rival..." In this context see also Helen Deutsch, *The Psychology of Woman*, N. York 1967 (Repr.), p. 354.

of the beloved need of course not be referred to in the song; its effect upon the lover's psyche is sufficient. And this effect could be enhanced by feelings of jealousy. It is also possible that the speaker suffers from unrequited love. There is longing for the lover, a never-ending desire that is not fulfilled.

III

The poetic material presented so far proves one important point: psychosomatic reactions associated with heterosexual love abound in Greek folk song. Their principal causes are desertion, jealousy and erotic grief, and they are very real for those involved; they are no "devices" of any sort. On the basis of this evidence it can no longer be one-sidedly maintained that the psychosomatic reaction in Sappho is proof of homosexual love.

Let us now return to the fragment under discussion. The woman speaker addresses herself to the girl, not to the man. She intimates her feelings to her (as one would do in a personal letter), though she probably never did so in front of the man and other bystanders. This intimacy of feelings demonstrates that she knows the girl, but it has yet to be established in what way. This would shed light on the character of her psychosomatic condition.

We have seen above that in folk song feelings of distress and despair occur when a girl feels deserted by the man she loves. But in Sappho it is not the man who deserted the woman; otherwise she would have addressed herself to him directly or indirectly. The man is, as already noted, a key figure in the poetic situation, but he appears not to be the real cause of the woman's suffering. The girl must then have deserted her, if desertion is the issue. But even so, we still do not know what kind of relationship existed between the two since desertion is not easily defined. It would be too hasty to assume a sexual relationship.

Now folk song teaches us that desertion kindles jealousy which, as a rule, triggers feeling of hostility⁶¹). But in isolated cases the deserted woman's love transcends such feelings⁶²). In Sappho too there are no hostile feelings. But in Sappho the situation is more delicate since it involves two people of the same sex.

61) Cf. p. 107 ff. *above*.

62) Cf. p. 109 f. *above*.

The term *love* must therefore be seen in all of its possible aspects (if we are to look at the matter with an open mind). At this point a question arises of the utmost importance for any serious discussion of the relationship between the two girls: What is the speaker's age? Is she an adult or a teenager?

Every psychiatrist knows that the age of a woman plays, *inter alia*, a decisive role in any analysis of her love inclinations and impulses⁶³). It is a well established fact that a relationship between two girls in prepuberty, early and later puberty "can have the character of a completely sublimated friendship or its context may be tender-erotic and *sometimes* (my italics) even openly sexual"⁶⁴). In puberty a girl needs, we are told, her "best friend" with whom she shares failure and success, with whom she allies herself against the world about and with whom she identifies; and we are also told that "The sexual ingredient of this relationship usually remains unconscious, but the mutual tenderness often has an erotic character"⁶⁵).

What would now happen if one of the girls left the other for the sake of a man? How would she feel? If, on the other hand, the deserted is an adult her reaction would have to be seen in a different light. But we know nothing about the age of the Sapphic speaker; her words give us no clue. Lack of information about this point should make us reserve definite judgement on the character of the feelings expressed. The loss of sublimated friendship should not be felt less intensively than the loss of the love object of an adult woman. But there are other considerations too.

Greek folk song teaches us, further, that a girl may experience fear and anxiety if her man is taken away by another girl⁶⁶), and I have already considered the possibility that the woman speaker in Sappho sees in the girl a successful love competitor⁶⁷). It is not without significance that she calls the man godlike. If

63) See Deutsch, *op. cit.* 325 ff. Yet Devereux did not even raise the question. Here I wish to acknowledge thankfully that my colleague psychiatrist Dr. E. Liberakis and his wife Helen discussed with me this point and other aspects of the problem, making helpful and enlightening comments.

64) Deutsch, *op. cit.* 332, who says in the same context: "The union of the two persons of the same sex can assume various forms; *the mildest form* (italics mine) is the most frequent".

65) Deutsch, *loc. cit.*

66) Cf. "I fear lest you take him from me" (p. 110 above).

67) See my study (n. 3 above), p. 70ff.

folk song is instructive here too, this is an expression of admiration⁶⁸) for the man which hardly conceals her feelings.

It is remarkable, though, that there is no open hostility towards the girl. In Greek folk song the love competitor is an enemy. A girl who saw the man she loved with another girl expresses her feelings in the following distich:

ἐμαύρισ' ἢ καρδούλα μου σὰν τοῦ ψωμᾶ τὴν πάνα
σὰ σέ 'δα κι ἐκουβέντιαζες μὲ τὸν ὄχτροό μου ἀντάμα⁶⁹).

The man was only talking to a girl but for the other she posed a threat to her relationship to the man, and that is why she is her enemy. As in Sappho, and in other folk songs, the heart is negatively affected⁷⁰). Here, but not in Sappho, it is jealousy that inflames the heart. But as in Sappho here too we have the σέ-address; the speaker expresses her feelings directly to the person concerned.

There are however other aspects of the love competition. A recurrent motif in folk song is the *ἔρωτικός καημός* (love grief). Feelings of hostility are absent⁷¹). The main causes underlying love grief are: unrequited love⁷²), desertion, loss or death of the lover, and resignation resulting in from defeat in love competition⁷³). In Sappho we should also take into consideration that the speaker knows the girl⁷⁴). If she were her "best friend" feel-

68) Cf. esp. p. 109f. *above*.

69) Quoted by Maria Lioudakis, *Μαντινάδες*, p. 241 nr. 9. In translation:

My heart turned black like the baker's mop
when I saw you talking to my enemy.

For another lengthy folk song containing a reference to a love competitor as "enemy" see my study (p. 74).

70) In this context see also Thompson, *op. cit.* 731, "Heart breaks when girl hears lover kisses another".

71) Cf. p. 109ff. *above*.

72) A girl was asked by the man whom she loved but could not marry (Passow, p. 313 nr. 436 v. 21):

Κόρη μ' τί ἔχεις καὶ θλίβεσαι; τί ἔχεις κι ἀναστενάζεις;
(My maiden what is the matter with you, why are you
downhearted, why are you sighing?)

She replied: *ἔμαθα πὼς παντρεύτηκες*... (I have heard you got married). This answer says everything.

73) See further Politis, *op. cit.* p. 162ff., nr. 129 and 130. Cf. also Passow, p. 412 nr. 532f., esp. v. 6:

Κι ὁ ἰδικός σου ὁ καυμός στὸν ἄδη θὰ μὲ πάγη.
(And grief for you will send me to Hades)

74) Cf. n. 6 *above*.

ings of friendship might not allow her to be hostile, but she would not only feel the loss but also her own disadvantage in her friend's success.

It is not without significance that she is pictured as a charming girl (*ἄδν φωνεΐσας, γελαΐσας ἰμέροεν*). In Greek folk song physical endowments play the most decisive role in the game of love⁷⁵), though not necessarily in the arrangement of marriages since this matter has, as a rule, been in the hands of the parents who consider other, more important, factors too. Good looks are praised⁷⁶), and the girl who is not physically gifted loses⁷⁷). A rather obscure word in Sappho, *πένητα* v. 17⁷⁸), might allude, if seen in this light, to the speaker's poverty in physical endowments, especially in view of her own allusion to the girl's charming nature.

In Sappho it is art combined with a keen appreciation of erotic situations that accounts for an elaborate psychosomatic description of what may happen to a woman under certain circumstances. But what actually happens need not, and cannot, be presented in the original form; poetry, even as an imitation of life, is never the actual experience⁷⁹). The selection of the most common psychosomatic symptoms and their combination in a whole amounts to an exaggeration which, unlike the description of the same symptoms in folk song⁸⁰), is highly artistic as the ancient critic realized, though no "device" of any sort.

To sum up: The above discussion has demonstrated that the evidence claimed for Sappho's inversion and its variants is based upon one-sided and biased conclusions about the poetic situation and particularly the nature of the psychosomatic reaction described in the poem. We have seen that the feelings expressed are representative of women in love and in need for a meaningful relationship. The character of the feelings in Sappho cannot be definitely determined⁸¹).

From the above discussion have emerged a couple of new

75) Cf. Passow, p. 313 nr. 436 and its variants; Politis, p. 117f. nr. 83. Cf. also n. 77 *below*.

76) Cf. p. 110f. *above*.

77) Cf. n. 59 *above*.

78) Page does not comment.

79) Cf. n. 89 *below*.

80) But exaggeration as such is at home in folk poetry. Cf. for example the song entitled "The bridesmaid who became bride" (Politis, p. 117 nr. 83), and esp. v. 26ff. which describe the bridesmaid's beauty.

81) Reasons have been given above. Cf. esp. p. 114.

points which lend themselves to serious consideration of any open-minded approach to this fragment of Sappho. The woman speaker (her identity cannot be established, and we should do well not to assume that she is Sappho herself) identifies herself with the charming girl sitting close to the godlike man and suffers an emotional breakdown (exaggerated but essentially true to the nature of erotic experiences known to folk song) because she does not enjoy what the other does: the company of a man which leads, for the Greek girl, to matrimony-her life dream since ancient times. The winner is the rival but the loser is noble in her defeat:

ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ + καὶ πένητα + (v. 17)⁸²).

The emotional breakdown may also be attributed to a young girl's frightening realization that her "best friend" deserted her for another, more meaningful, relationship. If I prefer the first of the two alternative interpretations it is mainly because it fits much better the admiration for the man. She is not mad at her. Her friendship and perhaps affection would seem to transcend animosity and hatred⁸³). She realizes that she must now be alone, but this she must first learn to face (v. 17), however heart-breaking this experience may be. The meaning of such a desertion cannot be fathomed since the character of the friendship it presupposes cannot be determined either⁸⁴). The psychosomatic reaction does not as such – this point must be emphasized – prove any homosexual anxiety. The feelings expressed abound in Greek love songs.

A final word on Sappho's objectivity. Ps. Longinus remarks: πάντα ὡς ἀλλότρια διοιχόμενα ἐπιζητεῖ. Page comments: "Sappho

82) The motif of erotic grief has already been noted in Greek folk song (p. 109f. *above*). Guided by Page's understanding of the poem's objectivity (cf. n. 85 and 86) Devereux claims (p. 18), "All of Sappho's ten symptoms are psycho-physiological; not one word explicitly denotes a purely psychological state such as sadness", and comes to the conclusion that Sappho was able "to remain clear-headed and to observe herself objectively". But Devereux, alike his source, has no comments to make on the verse just quoted (cf. M. L. West, *Maia* 22 (1970), 313; for M. Treu, *Sappho*², München 1958, p. 179, is τόλματον "kein Aufruf zu einem "Wagnis", sondern zur *τλημοσύνη*"); nor does he make any thoughts at all about the fact that the poem is not complete and that at this point, i. e. v. 17, a new stanza begins which very clearly indicates that the speaker's mood changes.

83) In this context cf. p. 109ff. *above*.

84) Cf. n. 81 *above*.

speaks of her sensations as dispassionately as if she were an interested bystander”⁸⁵). The difference between the two statements is fundamental: while the ancient critic thinks of Sappho in terms of her art, the modern scholar thinks in terms of Sappho’s personal experience⁸⁶). Sappho is able to objectify what befalls lovers (τὰ συμβαίνοντα⁸⁷) ταῖς ἐρωτικαῖς μανίαις), what, in other words, is common human experience, and of course personal since Sappho too was a woman besides being a poetess. The ancient critic does not say or suggest that Sappho speaks in this poem from her own personal experience as a woman. It is far from his purpose to assert or deny that Sappho portrays her own self. He knows that this poem is art, not a recording of live experience⁸⁸). If Sappho “*observes* and *describes* objectively” (Devereux), this is because she is a gifted poetess, not a “clear-headed” patient⁸⁹).

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85) *Op. cit.* 26f.

86) If the words just quoted are not explicit enough, read the previous paragraph of Page’s text (p. 26): “Sappho describes the psychological symptoms of the passion which possesses her when she sees a girl...”

87) For τὰ συμβαίνοντα = συννιτάρχοντα cf. D. A. Russel, “*Longinus*” on the *Sublime*, Oxford 1964, p. 100.

88) Ps. Longinus says καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας αὐτῆς ἐκάστοτε λαμβάνει (10, 1), but this ἀλήθεια becomes poetry, and poetry is what we read, not the original ἀλήθεια in whatever form it existed in someone’s life.

89) We should do well to keep in mind that the poet’s “observation comes to us completely impregnated by his peculiar spirit and by the purpose of his art” (Lascelles Abercrombie, *The Theory of Poetry*, N. York 1968 (Repr.), p. 309).