

Limerence—*l'amour-passion*—as aberrantly salient sense-making

*c'est le sens qui le fait frissonner¹
toute véritable amoureuse est plus ou moins paranoïaque²*

Sappho got it bad. Before a small audience in a Houston bookstore the young woman reads from her recently published volume of poetry entitled *Muse # 10*:

*The guy next to you on the subway
seems like Superman to me—
what they used to call a god.
How easy for him to flirt,
to make you smile,
to hear your golden laughter
and joke with you again.
Will he have your phone number
before the last stop?
is a game for gods.
My tongue would shatter
before I said a word
if you even looked at me.³*

This rendering tracks the original in the god-simile and the laughter even if not in the seating arrangement (next to = beside, ἐναντίος = across from), viz:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν ὦνερ, ὅττις ἐναντίος τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἱμερόεν τό μ' ἦ μάν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόησεν·
ὥς γὰρ εἰσίδω βροχέως σε, φώνας
οὐδὲν ἔτ' ἵκει.⁴

¹ *Werther n'est pas pervers, il est amoureux : il crée du sens, toujours, partout, de rien, et c'est le sens qui le fait frissonner : il est dans le brasier du sens.* Roland Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977) 81: http://palimpsestes.fr/textes_philo/barthes/Barthes_Fragments1977.pdf .

² *Adroitement, elle pose les questions au moment où le temps manque pour donner des réponses nuancées et sincères, ou bien où les circonstances les interdisent ; c'est au cours de l'étreinte amoureuse, à l'orée d'une convalescence, dans les sanglots ou sur le quai d'une gare qu'elle interroge impérieusement ; des réponses arrachées, elle fait des trophées ; et, faute de réponses, elle fait parler les silences ; toute véritable amoureuse est plus ou moins paranoïaque.* Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe II: L'Expérience Vécue* (1949): <https://archive.org/details/LeDeuxiemeSexeTome2SimoneDeBeauvoir/mode/2up?view=theater> at 560.

³ *For All Mankind* (Apple TV 2021) season 2, episode 5, "The Weight."

⁴ Text and resources at <https://digitalsappho.org/fragments/fr31/> .

At the girl's bewitching⁵ laughter Sappho says 'the heart in my breast flutters so when I glance your way voice fails;' ἀλλὰ κάμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, 'even my tongue is utterly broken.' Sappho continues with additional physiological details which the modern poet omits—her poem is complete as quoted above.⁶ As Tennov reports, when the limerent reaction begins "Sexual attraction as such need not be experienced, although (a) the person is someone you view as a possible sexual partner, and (b) the initial 'admiration' may be, or seem to be, primarily physical attraction."⁷ The modern poet sticks to the imaginal aspect of the inceptive limerent reaction; catching that first sight – the spark; *Augenblick*; *le premier ravissement*⁸ – of the beloved which is more visionary than veridical.⁹ So when Dido first sees him (a mist parts *et voilà*) *restitit Aeneas claraque in luce refulsit, os umerosque deo similis*; 'Aeneas stood forth, gleaming in the clear light, godlike in face and shoulders.' For, by the conventions of epic, "his mother [Venus] herself had shed upon her son [on the cusp of middle age] the beauty of flowing locks, with youth's ruddy bloom, and on his eyes a joyous lustre," etc.¹⁰ Heinze comments that if it was indeed Virgil's ideal

"to come as close as possible to early epic without losing those improvements and new developments of later times which he valued, then here [Book IV, Dido's undoing] he was entering a world which had really only been discovered since Homer's time: the portrayal of love as a passion which both floods the soul with

⁵ ἴμερος "may originally have been a bond or spell." Robert Beekes with the assistance of Lucien van Beek, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek, Vol. I* (2010) 591, s.v. In this sense Sappho's use foreshadows the superstitions to come, for "MAGIE. Consultations magiques, menus rites secrets et actions votives ne sont pas absents de la vie du sujet amoureux, à quelque culture qu'il appartienne." *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 195. 'She loves me, she loves me not.'

⁶ Details open to a range of interpretation. E.g., λέπτων δ' αὔτικα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν perhaps describes 'the sex flush' noted by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (1966) 31-32. And in καδ δέ μ' ἴδρωσ κακχέεται the word ἴδρωσ, usually 'sweat,' may be in this context the "[b]asic vaginal lubrication [which] develops in a trans-udation like reaction through the walls of the vagina. This lubricating material appears early in the excitement phase, a matter of seconds after the onset of any [i.e., not necessarily tactile] form of sexual stimulation." *Id.* 44. ἴδρωσ, says Beekes, "is also metaph. of other moisture." *Etym. Dict. Greek* 578, s.v. All that may be 'too far along.' But surely though, sweat-breaking, trembling, and rushing in the ears can be no other than norepinephrine's scream—the limbic system's juicing the organism into high alert. See Robert M. Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (2017) 24-30. See also 'Dr L,' *Living with Limerence: A Guide for the Smitten* (2020) 30: "Arousal is driven by noradrenaline [norepinephrine]. It is a state of heightened awareness and physical excitation. Arousal leads to alertness, but also the classic symptoms of overloaded nervousness: racing heart, dilated pupils, sweaty palms, and blushing."

⁷ Dorothy Tennov, *Love and Limerence: The Experience of Being in Love* (2nd ed. 1999) 45.

⁸ "The supposedly initial episode (though it may be reconstructed after the fact) during which the amorous subject is 'ravished' (captured and enchanted) by the image of the loved object (popular name: *love at first sight*; scholarly name: *enamoration*)." Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (tr. Richard Howard 1978) 188.

⁹ So following Stendhal, who distinguishes the *coup de foudre* of *l'amour-passion* from that of sexual arousal. *De l'Amour* I.23: *L'amour-physique a aussi ses coups de foudre*.

¹⁰ *Aeneid* I.588-591. Tr. H. Rushton Fairclough rev. G. P. Goold.

rapture and at the same time destroys it [*Liebe als seelenerfüllender und seelenzerstörender Leidenschaft*].”¹¹

A New World for lyric *poiesis* maybe, yet hardly a newly discovered *Leidenschaft*. This rapturous soul-devouring something was already the goal of magic spells in the Atharva Veda; e.g.:

*This is the Apsarases’ love-spell, the conquering, resistless ones’.
Send the spell forth, ye Deities! Let him consume with love of
me.*

*I pray, may he remember me, think of me, loving and beloved.
Send forth the spell, ye Deities! Let him consume with love
of me.*

*That he may think of me, that I may never, never think of him.
Send forth the spell, ye Deities! Let him consume with love
of me.*

*Madden him, Maruts, madden him. Madden him, madden him,
O Air.*

*Madden him, Agni, madden him. Let him consume with love
of me.*¹²

From archaic spells like this one it’s no long walk to Sappho’s prayer beginning:

ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθανάτ’ Ἀφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,
μή μ’ ἄσαισι μηδ’ ὀνίαισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θῦμον¹³

Chronically limerent Sappho imagines Aphrodite’s asking, “Who is it this time? Never mind, leave it to me”—

*No doubt of it: if she’s in flight, soon she’ll pursue;
if presents she will not accept, she shall give;
if she does not love, then love she shall, and soon,
even against her wish.*¹⁴

‘Even against her wish,’ κωὺκ ἐθέλουσα, tells us that by Heidegger’s lights this is inauthentic care, and thus not, as scholars describe it, Heideggerian love. Tömmel, for instance, shows how

¹¹ Richard Heinze, *Virgil’s Epic Technique* (tr. Hazel and David Harvey and Fred Robertson 2nd ed. 1993) 96.

¹² Book VI, Hymn 130; tr. Ralph H. T. Griffiths: <https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/av/av06131.htm> .

¹³ <https://digitalsappho.org/fragments/fr1/> .

¹⁴ Tr. Gillian Spraggs: <http://www.gillianspraggs.com/translations/sappho1.html> .

in Heidegger's early Freiburg and Marburg years "love becomes the key to leading an authentic life." "Time and again," she notes,

"Heidegger defines love as the will to the other's true self: love, he writes to Hannah Arendt in 1925, meant 'volo ut sis'—'I want you to be what you are'. Even thirty years later, Heidegger still holds on to the same definition: 'Love is the letting-be [*das Sein-lassen*] in a deeper sense, according to which it calls forth the essence'. Like the kind of solicitude that 'leaps ahead' love is focused on the *other's* authentic existence."¹⁵

Schuback, too, reads Heidegger's letter to Arendt as a key text containing "what could be considered a definition of Heideggerian love. 'Amo means volo, ut sis, as Augustine said: I love you – I want you to be, what you are' (*Amo heisst volo, ut sis, sagt einmal Augustinus: ich liebe Dich – ich will, dass Du seiest, was Du bist*)."

She concludes her analysis by quoting from *Besinnung*:

"Philosophy means 'love of wisdom' . . . 'love' is the will that wills the beloved be; the will that wills that the beloved finds its way unto its ownmost and always therein [*daß das Geliebte sei, indem es zu seinem Wesen finde und in ihm wese*]. Such a will does not wish or demand anything. Through honoring, and not by trying to create the loved one [*ohne es doch zu schaffen*], this will lets above all the loved one – what is worthy of loving – 'be-come,' be the coming the beloved is."¹⁶

With respect to its care-structure Withy implicitly agrees with these interpretations of Heideggerian love, writing:

"In taking up the project of being Dasein, we take up the project of being-with other cases of Dasein (SZ 114). According to Heidegger, other cases of Dasein afford either leaping-in-for-them or leaping-ahead-of-them (SZ 122). Bringing these back to our having-been-thrown allows others to solicit either being-supported or being-manipulated. Correspondingly, we are solicited as either loving or domineering."¹⁷

¹⁵ Tatjana Noemi Tömmel, "Love as Passion: Epistemic and Existential Aspects of Heidegger's Unknown Concept" in *Heidegger on Affect* (ed. Christos Hadjioannou 2019) 229; citations omitted. Solicitude that leaps ahead is described at *Sein und Zeit* 122.

¹⁶ Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, "Heideggerian Love" in *Phenomenology of Eros* (ed. Jonna Bornemar and Schuback 2012) 142, 151. <http://sh.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?dswid=1428&pid=diva2%3A524777>.

¹⁷ Katherine Withy, "Finding Oneself, Called" in *Heidegger on Affect* 173. Accord A. Ferreira: "What is the difference between the mode of inauthentic solicitude and this of the closedness of attunement of love? The difference resides in the fact that with inauthentic solicitude *Dasein* located itself in care with the other, while in closedness of attunement of love *Dasein* takes on as its own the understanding of being that the other has of it, putting aside and

The point to note is that Heideggerian love purports to be distinct from limerence. For the distinctive feature of *amour-passion* is ‘*volo ut sis—the lover of me.*’ ‘I want to be loved by you’ as the song goes.¹⁸ In Tennov’s words, “The objective that you as a limerent persistently pursue, as is clear from the fantasy that occupies virtually your every waking moment, is a ‘return of feelings.’”¹⁹ In Stendhal’s: “To love is to enjoy seeing, touching, and sensing with all the senses, as closely as possible, a lovable object which loves in return [*un objet aimable et qui nous aime*].”²⁰ Barthes is particularly clear that a lover’s imperious suit (*requête impérieuse*)

“proceeds from the necessity, for the amorous subject, not only to be loved in return [*être aimé en retour*], to know it, to be sure of it, etc. . . . but to *hear it said* in the form which is as affirmative, as complete, as articulated as his own . . . Even as he obsessively asks himself why he is not loved, the amorous subject lives in the belief that the loved object does love him but does not tell him so. . . . that the other, episodically, should fail in his being, which is to love me [*manque à son être, qui est de m’aimer*]*—that is the origin of all my woes.*”²¹

In my view the difference authentic/inauthentic is of less import than the commonality between Heideggerian love and limerence: i.e., the vehemence, the fire. Heidegger valued most highly the intensity-potential of intentionality, which valuation Tömmel documents through his letter to Elisabeth Blochmann on 1 May, 1919:

“We have to be able to wait for extreme intensities of meaningful life [*hochgespannte Intensitäten sinnvollen Lebens*] – and we have to remain in continuity with these moments of vision [*Augenblicken*] – not so much savour them – as rather integrate them into life . . . in a vehement life [*vehementen Leben*], becoming aware of the own [*eigenen*] (not theoretic) but totally experiential directedness, is at the same time the sudden stepping into it – the *expansion of a new agitatedness* [*neuen Bewegtheit*] over and in all stirrings of life [*Lebensregnung*].”²²

Heidegger laid claim to originality in the discovery and resolution of “a central problem that has remained unknown to all previous philosophy”—‘world.’ “Elucidation of the world-concept,” he

losing its own self.” Acylene Maria Cabral Ferreira, “Love as Attunement,” 8 *Open Journal of Philosophy* 85, 95 (2018).

¹⁸ Billy Wilder had Marilyn Monroe interpret the lyric as ‘I wanna be *shtupt* by you’ (*Some Like it Hot* 1959) whereas Jodie Foster had Dylan McDermott sing it as a limerent (*Home for the Holidays* 1995).

¹⁹ *Love and Limerence* 57.

²⁰ *Love* (tr. Gilbert and Suzanne Sale [1957] 1975) 45 (Book I, ch. 2).

²¹ *A Lover’s Discourse* 152, 186.

²² “Love as Passion” 232; translating from Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918-1969* (ed. J. W. Storck 1990) 14.

says, “is one of the most central tasks of philosophy. The concept of world, or the phenomenon thus designated, is what has hitherto not yet been recognized in philosophy.”²³ For present purposes we will take ‘world’ as ‘field of intelligibility,’ in Sheehan’s metaphor.²⁴

The thing about fields is that like waterbeds and markets they fluctuate; they ‘curl’ and ‘diverge,’ they manifest gradients, and so on.²⁵ As Heidegger says, “There is only ever a change of attunement.”²⁶ Williams begins his *Origins of Field Theory* with Newton’s *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*,²⁷ but Sheehan intimates that the field-concept gets its first articulation far earlier, in Heraclitus’s ‘tensor’ imagery:

“Roughly: If we have listened to the λόγος, we will understand that to be σοφός is to be attuned to the basic factum. Here that factum is called

- λόγος, in the sense of the ingathering,
- In which all that is borne apart (διαφερόμενον, τὰ πάντα),
- Is gathered up and held in unity (ἔν),
- of a tense harmony (παλίντροπος ἁρμονία),
- that is like a tightly strung bow or lyre (ὄκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης).”²⁸

How does one get attuned to the basic factum? How to feel the tension of the field of intelligibility?²⁹ Through the basic attunements, *die Grundstimmungen*. More exactly, by experiencing their power, their difference from everyday modulations of howzitgoin’ *Befindlichkeit*; and, in the experience of that difference, to experience the field of intelligibility as such.³⁰

²³ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (tr. Albert Hofstadter rev. ed. 1988) 162, 165. GA 24: 231, 234: <https://www.beyng.com/gaselis/?vol=24&pg=231>. “Aren’t we astounded that philosophers didn’t emphasize ages ago that human reality is irreducibly structured as signifying?” *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956* (tr. Russell Grigg 1993) 199.

²⁴ “We are a hermeneutical field of force, like a magnet that draws things together into unities of sense insofar as these things are connected with a possibility of ourselves as the final point of reference.” Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (2015) 125.

²⁵ See H. M. Schey, *div, grad, curl and all that: an informal text on vector calculus* (4th ed. 2005); <https://archive.org/details/H.M.ScheyDivGradCurlAndAllThat/mode/2up>.

²⁶ *Es geschieht nur immer ein Wandel der Stimmungen*. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (tr. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker 1995) 68. GA 29/30: 102. Stendhal: *la manière d’être d’un homme passionné change dix fois par jour*. *De l’Amour* 1.2, n. 1.

²⁷ L. Pearce Williams, *The Origins of Field Theory* (1966); <https://archive.org/details/originsoffieldth0000unse/mode/2up>.

²⁸ Thomas Sheehan, “Heidegger: πάθος as the Thing Itself” in *Heidegger on Affect* 39; <https://www.beyng.com/docs/TomSheehanPathos.html>.

²⁹ “What is important is only whether the existent Dasein, in conformity with its existential possibility, is original enough still to see expressly the world that is always already unveiled with its existence, to verbalize it, and thereby to make it expressly visible to others.” *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* 171. GA 24: 244.

³⁰ Damasio postulates “another variety of feeling which I suspect preceded the others in evolution. I call it *background feeling* because it originates in ‘background’ bodily states rather than in emotional states. It is not the

Stimmung, says the consensus, originates in large part in the limbic system (“The term is something of a catchall for a number of evolutionarily old structures”³¹). “Limbic function,” Sapolsky writes,

“Is now recognized as central to the emotions that fuel our best and worst behaviors . . . There really aren’t ‘centers’ in the brain ‘for’ particular behaviors. This is particularly the case with the limbic system and emotion. There is indeed a sub-subregion of the motor cortex that approximates being the ‘center’ for making your left pinkie bend; other regions have ‘center’-ish roles in regulating breathing or body temperature. But there sure aren’t centers for feeling pissy or horny, for feeling bittersweet nostalgia or warm protectiveness tinged with contempt, or for that what-is-that-thing-called-love feeling.”³²

Damasio distinguishes primary and secondary emotions. Primary emotions “depend on limbic system circuitry” yet “the mechanism of primary emotions does not describe the full range of emotional behaviors.” In an individual’s development primary emotions

“are followed by mechanisms of *secondary emotions*, which occur once we begin experiencing feelings and forming *systematic connections between categories of objects and situations, on the one hand, and primary emotions, on the other*. Structures in the limbic system are not sufficient to support the process of secondary emotions. The network must be broadened, and it requires the agency of prefrontal and of somatosensory cortices.”³³

In Heidegger’s terms, “acts which ‘represent’ and acts which ‘take an interest’ are interconnected in their foundations.”³⁴

In any case one is hard-pressed to find a more concise description of that what-is-that-thing-called-love feeling, the phenomenon of limerence//*amour-passion*, than the first five lines of *Aeneid*, Book IV:

Verdi of grand emotion, nor the Stravinsky of intellectualized emotion, but rather a minimalist in tone and beat, the feeling of life itself, the sense of being.” Antonio Damasio, *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994) 150. *Alltägliche Befindlichkeit?*

³¹ *Id.* 28. Notably, “Nature appears to have built the apparatus of rationality [better, sense-making] not just on top of the apparatus of biological regulation, but also *from* it and *with* it. The mechanisms for behavior beyond drives and instincts use, I believe, both the upstairs and the downstairs: the neocortex becomes engaged along with the older brain core, and rationality results from their concerted activity.” *Id.* 128; Damasio’s italics.

³² *Behave* 25.

³³ *Descartes’ Error* 133, 134; Damasio’s italics.

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson 1962) 178; SZ 139.

*At regina gravi iam dudum saucia cura
vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni.
multa viri virtus animo multusque recursat
gentis honos: haerent infixi pectore vultus
verbaque, nec placidam membris dat cura quietem.*

This description is notable for its account of ‘intrusive thinking’: “Oft to her mind rushes back the hero’s valour, oft his glorious stock; his looks and his words cling fast to her bosom.” (tr. Fairclough/Goold) Tennov found that “Limerence is first and foremost a condition of cognitive [i.e. sense-making] obsession,” and cites Stendhal: “A person in love is unremittingly and uninterruptedly occupied with the image of [the] beloved.” One of Tennov’s informants takes it hard that his limerent object forgot to wear a pin he had given her: “It meant I wasn’t in her thoughts the way she was in mine.” Another tells Tennov, “If Joe forgets to call, it means I am not in his thoughts the way he is in mine.”³⁵

Intrusive thinking and the concomitant obsession with signs are symptoms of the field’s intensification. “The limerent person develops a condition of sustained alertness, a heightening of awareness, and an enormous fund of energy to deploy in pursuit of the limerent aim. [*nec placidam membris dat cura quietem*] You are ever ready to perceive [so as to interpret] LO’s most minute actions at any time when it is conceivable that they have meaning in relation to the goal.”³⁶ So Barthes:

“I look for signs, but of what? What is the object of my reading? Is it: am I loved (am I loved no longer, am I still loved)? . . . A man who wants the truth is never answered save in strong, highly colored images, which nonetheless turn ambiguous, indecisive, once he tries to transform them into signs. As in any manticism, the consulting lover must make his own truth [*doit faire lui-même sa vérité*].”³⁷

Making her own truth the limerent subject creates the version of the limerent object which she needs; a process Stendhal called ‘crystallization’: “by *crystallization* I mean a certain fever of the imagination which translates a normally commonplace object into something unrecognizable, and makes it an entity apart.”³⁸ All too often with results that appear ridiculous to bystanders. Barthes comments, for example, that

³⁵ *Love and Limerence* 33, 55.

³⁶ *Id.* 62. The goal, ‘love of me,’ being the ultimate point of reference, as in Sheehan’s metaphor of the field.

³⁷ *A Lover’s Discourse* 214, 215. *heu vatum ignarae mentes! quid vota furentem, quid delubra iuvant?* IV.65-66.

³⁸ *Love* 64, fn. 1; Book I, ch. 15.

“Charlotte is quite insipid; she is the paltry character of a powerful, tormented, flamboyant drama staged by the subject Werther; by a kindly decision [*une décision gracieuse*] of this subject, a colorless object is placed in the center of the stage and there adored, idolized, *taken to task*, covered with discourse, with prayers (and perhaps, surreptitiously, with invectives); as if she were a huge motionless hen huddled amid her feathers, around which circles a slightly mad cock [*un mâle un peu fou*].”³⁹

ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem. . . uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur urbe furens. Stendhal, too, repeatedly characterizes *amour-passion* as ‘a disease,’ ‘a fever,’ ‘a disease of the soul,’ ‘madness.’ And per de Beauvoir, “every woman in love is more or less a paranoiac.” In limerence, as in Wonderland, ‘We’re all mad here.’

Hardly surprising then that the phenomena of limerence resemble those of beginning psychosis; in particular a heightened intensity of the field of intelligibility to the point that *Bedeutsamkeit* as such is palpable. In fact a *Stimmung* that warps *Verstehen* to the point of fracture. In Lacan’s words

“[T]he difficulty of addressing the problem of paranoia arises precisely because it’s situated on the plane of understanding. The irreducible elementary phenomenon here is at the level of interpretation. . . . We have, then, a subject for whom the world has begun to take on a meaning. . . . For some time he has been prey to strange phenomena that consist in his noticing things going on in the street. But what things? If you question him you will see that some points remain mysterious to him while he will express himself about others. In other words, he symbolizes what is happening in terms of meaning. Very often he doesn’t know, if you look closely, whether things are favorable or unfavorable towards him, but he looks for what is revealed by the way his counterparts act, or by some observed feature in the world, in this world which is never purely and simply inhuman since it’s man-made. . . . What is the subject ultimately saying, specially at a certain period of his delusion? That there is meaning. What meaning he doesn’t know, but it comes to the foreground, it asserts itself, and for him it’s perfectly understandable.”⁴⁰

³⁹ *A Lover’s Discourse* 31-32.

⁴⁰ *The Psychoses* 20-21. Cf.: “In Conrad’s stage model [of schizophrenia], there is often a prodromal delusional mood prior to the onset of the delusions. This may last for days, months, or even years. During this period, the patient experiences an increasingly oppressive tension, ‘a feeling of nonfinality’ or expectation. The individual describes that something is ‘in the air’ but is unable to say what has changed.” Aaron L. Mishara, “Klaus Conrad (1905-1961): Delusional Mood, Psychosis, and Beginning Schizophrenia,” 36 *Schizophrenia Bull.* 9, 10 (2009): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2800156/>. From a famous case: “I believe I counted four different depths in the total text of [his novel *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said*]. A single morpheme will do it. ASHER will be perfect since it is of enormous antiquity/depth. And it’s on every [Linda] Ronstadt album starting with ‘Heart Like a Wheel.’ We are talking about literally millions of instances (print-outs); and many linkings. This

This is the phenomenon of ‘aberrant salience’ in Kapur’s phrase; *Trema* in Conrad’s term.⁴¹ The inceptive psychotic, like the limerent, *est dans le brasier du sens*; i.e., “a stage of heightened awareness and emotionality combined with a sense of anxiety and impasse, a drive to ‘make sense’ of the situation.”⁴² An agitated state of expectation under uncertainty with a bias toward self-delusion. So Stendhal: “From the moment he falls in love even the wisest man no longer sees anything *as it really is*. . . . He no longer admits an element of chance in things and loses his sense of the probable; judging by its effect on his happiness, whatever he imagines becomes reality.”⁴³

Tömmel contends that Heidegger developed a “kairologic concept of love (and death) through his intensive engagement with the messianism of St. Paul in 1919, and subsequently transferred it to his own philosophy.” Yet she opines finally that “To model intimate relationships after Pauline messianism is a strange choice, both sacralizing and marginalizing the other, who seems to be only an occasion to return to oneself.”⁴⁴ Not so very strange, perhaps, in view of Werther’s flamboyant drama fetishizing Charlotte. “Enough that,” Barthes goes on, “in a flash, I should see the other in the guise of an inert object, like a kind of stuffed doll, for me to shift my desire from this annulled object to my desire itself; it is my desire I desire, and the loved being is no more than its tool.”⁴⁵ So it may be the case that in Heideggerian love, as in Pauline messianism, the **drama** is the point; the way to feel most alive, most in being.

In his lectures on Paul’s letters to Galatia and Thessalonika (WS 1920-21) Heidegger seeks to penetrate “into the grounding phenomena of primordial Christian life [*die Grundphänomene des urchristlichen Lebens*].”⁴⁶ He finds the index-phenomenon of that life to be θλίψις, lit. ‘pressure,’ ‘pinch.’

message traffic uses a system that springs normally almost automatically into existence, given the nature of the fourth axis perception (time as space). So the method is not ingenious. But the real question is: Who is sending, and to whom, and what are they saying?” *The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* (ed. Pamela Jackson and Jonathan Lethem 2011) 676-677. All that meaning, what does it mean? PKD lived in high-functioning psychosis from early 1974 until his death in 1982.

⁴¹ Shitij Kapur, “Psychosis as a State of Aberrant Salience: A Framework Linking Biology, Phenomenology, and Pharmacology in Schizophrenia,” 160 *Am. J. Psychiatry* 13 (2003): <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.1176/appi.ajp.160.1.13> ; Klaus Conrad, *Die beginnende Schizophrenie. Versuch einer Gestaltanalyse des Wahns* ([1959] 2002).

⁴² “Psychosis as a State of Aberrant Salience” 15.

⁴³ *Love* 60; I.12.

⁴⁴ “Love as Passion” 234-5, 242.

⁴⁵ *A Lover’s Discourse* 31.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (tr. Mathias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei 2004) 47; GA 60: 68 <https://www.beyng.com/gaselis/?vol=60.00&pg=68> .

“δουλεύειν [‘to serve’] and ἀναμένειν [‘to await’] determine,” Heidegger writes, “every other reference as fundamental directions. The awaiting of the παρουσία of the Lord is decisive. . . . The experience is an absolute distress [*Bedrängnis*] (θλίψις) which belongs to the life of the Christian himself. The acceptance is an entering-oneself-into-anguish [*ein Sich-hinein-Stellen in die Not*]. This distress is a fundamental characteristic, it is an absolute concern [*absolute Bekümmierung*] in the horizon of the παρουσία, of the second coming at the end of time. With that we are introduced into the self-world of Paul.”⁴⁷

That is to say, “Paul lives in a peculiar distress, one that is, as apostle, his own [*eigenen Bedrängnis*], in expectation of the second coming of the Lord.”⁴⁸

Drawing on the case of Phineas Gage and other patients with similar brain trauma, Damasio observes that “The powers of reason and the experience of emotion decline together.”⁴⁹ Heidegger learned that, conversely, the powers of sense-making and the experience of emotion increase together; intensification of mood augments sense-making. (The sanity, accuracy, reliability, practicability, etc. of the sense thus made is a separate matter.⁵⁰) Our “uncommonly good ability to find a signal even in total noise”⁵¹ is boosted by emotion, and that ability is thereby more the wonder.

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⁴⁷ *Id.* 67; GA 60: 97-98.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Descartes’ Error* 54.

⁵⁰ Sheehan: “What we do through all our waking hours (perhaps even during REM sleep) is make sense of stuff, whether of people, things, ideas, or experiences—whatever we happen to encounter. We make sense of things even when we get it wrong, or go insane, or babble incoherently on our death beds.” “Heidegger: πάθος as the Thing Itself” in *Heidegger on Affect* 29. Lonergan: “insights are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure.” Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (1971) 13.

⁵¹ Baruch Fischhoff, “For those condemned to study the past: Heuristics and biases in hindsight,” in *Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases* (ed. Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky 1982) 347. More exactly perhaps, the ability **to construct** a signal out of bits of noise; *Sinn* from *Sinnlosigkeit*; *on crée du sens, toujours, partout, de rien*. Psychotics find “further confirmatory evidence—in the glances of strangers, in the headlines of newspapers, and in the lapel pins of newscasters.” “Psychosis as a State of Aberrant Saliency” 15-16. “The Trash of the gutter ‘con-spire’ to signal people information.” *The Exegesis of PKD* 101. “He made up his mind to venture it; he would risk translating rays into faith.” *The Education of Henry Adams* ([1907] 1990) ch. XXV, ‘The Dynamo and the Virgin’ p. 356.