

Attraction

Attraction is like the word, in language, by the time you go to analyze it, to ask it what it really is, it is gone, it is was, part of the past. ,

Attraction, however, quickly turns into memory. I am attracted to a certain landscape in Attica, where at sun fall the final rays, each day, dissipate into a sudden display of orange fire, which is momentaneous but hard to forget, and has power to remain for a lifetime. Such an attraction, and its lifetime staying power, will seem to have seized upon Dante when, at age eleven, he crossed paths with Beatrice at a street corner in Florence. In that case the attractive after memory will have been strong enough to have lasted a life time, and in an important sense to have generated a masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*.

On a less lofty level we nay say that attractions constantly flicker in and out of daily life. It may be a pretty girl or boy, it may be a new baby panda, just dropping in from Beijing. It may be just the right macho pair of gloves or the ideal filmy skirt; it is in any case mouth wateringly attractive. It lures you. It is a perfect instance of what the mediaeval schoolmen called *id quod visum placet*, that which, seen, pleases.

It will be the truth of the attractive thing seen (or experienced), in every case, that the moment of attraction, the moment of the attraction itself, will evanesce at once, and be replaced by the memory of it. The memory will be the place where the real mystery of the attraction lies.