

The yearning of love, the ??????, which has been expressed in countless ways and forms by the poets of all ages, without their exhausting the subject or even doing it justice; this longing which makes us imagine that the possession of a certain woman will bring interminable happiness, and the loss of her, unspeakable pain; this longing and this pain do not arise from the needs of an ephemeral individual, but are, on the contrary, the sigh of the spirit of the species, discerning irreparable means of either gaining or losing its ends. It is the species alone that has an interminable existence: hence it is capable of endless desire, endless gratification, and endless pain. These, however, are imprisoned in the heart of a mortal; no wonder, therefore, if it seems like to burst, and can find no expression for the announcements of endless joy or endless pain. This it is that forms the substance of all erotic poetry that is sublime in character, which, consequently, soars into transcendent metaphors, surpassing everything earthly. This is the theme of Petrarch, the material for the St. Preuxs, Werthers, and Jacopo Ortis, who otherwise could be neither understood nor explained. This infinite regard is not based on any kind of intellectual, nor, in general, upon any real merits of the beloved one; because the lover frequently does not know her well enough; as was the case with Petrarch.

It is the spirit of the species alone that can see at a glance of what _value_ the beloved one is to _it_ for its purposes. Moreover, great passions, as a rule, originate at first sight:

"Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight."