

Desire

Desire is a, but not the only, form of attraction. If I am attracted to someone, I may desire them—the passing girl or boy on the street, the sweet- meat in the bakery window, the idea of going to Tahiti on a vacation. Or I may be attracted to someone or something—a pure bred stallion, or a charming stage performer—and not desire them at all.

So what is it that makes for this particular appearance of desire? Is it a question for the biologist, the psychologist, or the sexologist? Why do I feel desire in one case but not in another?

Our very being is nisus, or drive. This is not to speak of a faculty, which has this or that function. It is to speak of a condition or milieu in which we exist. We are, after all, given our being, with its movements; intentions not simply built into it, but defining it. We cannot reach inside ourselves and attach the desire button to the attraction button.

Are we then automata spurred to feelings, moods, and desires by the whims of machinery operating inside us? It seems far-fetched to resort to such modish lingo, in order to account for actions, desires which might at first glance seem the most self-evident of human events. Perhaps, though, the far-fetched is on target. The 'whims of machinery' will have to be reshaped but the narrative will bear the same import, that a given inner wave moved the tide of attractions closer to the tide of desires.

Forgive me, for I have once more tried to provide a scientific show of an answer in place of a kitchen shelf metaphysic. The truth is often buried at the foot of the woodpile.