

Lecture 6 - Beauty and Knowledge

Dianoia and Noesis

- **Dianoia:** Discursive reasoning, logical, propositional, conceptual.
- **Noesis:** Successful noticing (e.g., "reading the room"). It prioritizes what is salient in a flowing, perspectival way. Deep insight, mindsight.
- We need multiple types of knowing. Beauty relates deeply to *noesis*.
- **Beauty is profound noticing.**

The Four Ps of Knowing (4E Cognitive Science)

1. **Propositional Knowing (Dianoia)**
2. Knowing that something is true.
3. Stored in semantic memory.
4. Yields beliefs and conviction.
5. **Procedural Knowing (Techne)**
6. Knowing how to do something.
7. Stored in procedural memory.
8. Yields skills.
9. Success = *power* (in the sense of reliability, efficacy).
10. **Perspectival Knowing (Noesis)**
11. Knowing what it's like to be here now, in this context.
12. Stored in episodic memory.
13. Yields situational awareness and insight.
14. Success = *realization* (truth as presence).
15. **Participatory Knowing (Gnosis)**
16. Knowing by *being* in relationship with the world.
17. Memory = selfhood (how roles and identity cohere).
18. Success = *belonging* (meaning in life).

Dependency Chain:

- Participatory → Perspectival → Procedural → Propositional
- Wisdom and virtue require **all** four types.

Socratic Dialogues and Non-Propositional Knowing

- Plato's dialogues frustrate us if we expect clear definitions (e.g., of honesty).
- Socrates uses dialogues to *evoke* awareness of non-propositional knowledge.
- Beauty awakens us to these layers of knowing.

The Allegory of the Cave and Anagoge

- **Anagoge**: A loop of inner transformation and deeper insight into reality.
- The freed person ascends from illusion to reality (sunlight), returns transformed.
- This cycle is **reciprocal opening**:
- As you open to reality, it opens to you.
- As you organize the psyche, you perceive more clearly.

Contrast: Reciprocal Narrowing

- Addiction as a looping *closure*:
- World and self both lose depth.
- Leads to loss of agency.

Meta-Desires and Fulfillment

1. **Peace of mind** (inner harmony).
2. **Contact with reality** (truth).
3. Anagoge fulfills both: harmonizing psyche + deeper connection with being.

Love and Beauty

- **Symposium:** Diotima's ladder of love is anagoge through beauty.
- Beauty-love develops from particular persons to universal principles.
- Beauty and love are *metaxu* (between):
- Between presence and absence, desire and fulfillment.

Finitude and Transcendence (Hyland)

- Human beings are inherently *metaxu*:
- **Finite:** Fragile, temporal.
- **Transcendent:** Capable of insight, nobility.
- Holding both together is **tonos**, creative tension.

Political Implications

- Left (finitude): Compassion, shared vulnerability.
- Right (transcendence): Nobility, virtue, maturation.
- When polarized (not held together), we lose humanity.

Dianoia and Noesis in Dialogue

- **Speech without noesis:** Empty chatter, nihilism.
- **Noesis without dialogue:** Isolation, disconnection.
- **True logos** requires back-and-forth (dia-logue).

Logos as Metaxu

- **Logos** is:
- Rationality (not just logic).
- Proportionality, relationship.
- A principle organizing reality and speech.
- Bounded by non-discursive experience (suchness + moreness).

Beauty as Re-Inhabiting Humanity

- Beauty brings us back to:
- Non-propositional knowing.
- Shared logos.
- Space for self-transformation.

Crash Course on Neoplatonism (via Sammon & Desmond)

- Neoplatonism = Platonic spirituality + Aristotelian science + Stoic ethics
- **Aristotle**: Categorization of reality (reality as layered, nested).
- **Plato**: Anagoge (spiritual ascent).
- **Stoics**: Cultivation of virtue via internalized Socratic dialogos.

The One (Plotinus)

- Not a "thing" but the **power of one-ing** (integration).
- Transcends categories, both actual and potential.
- Participatory knowing of the One = **God as Beauty**

Top-Down and Bottom-Up

- Being is structured via interpenetrating processes:
- Emanation (top-down)
- Emergence (bottom-up)
- Logos flows in both directions.

Deep Participatory Knowing

- Contemplative practice (theoria) enacts alignment of psyche with being.
- This gives us:
- Deep meaning.
- Virtue.
- Love and beauty.
- Fulfillment.

Beauty as the Participatory Knowing of God

- Beauty is not just pleasing.
- It's a *relevance realization*, a call to transformation.
- Properly understood, beauty is:
- Participatory.
- Transcendent.
- Finite.
- Real.

Final Reflection

- The loss of logos as deep reason (not mere logic) has led to:
 - Shallow beauty.
 - Nihilism.
 - Political polarization.
 - To reclaim our humanity:
 - Rediscover metaxu.
 - Practice anagoge.
 - Honor the between of love and beauty.
 - Dialogue in logos.
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Next: Brendan Thomas Sammon and Desmond on *The God Who Is Beauty*.