

Lecture 8: Beauty and Life

Reconnecting the Spiritual and the Scientific

- To address the meaning crisis, we must reconnect the spiritual and scientific worlds.
- Avoid prioritizing one over the other or dichotomizing them, or we risk falling into nihilism.
- Sammon provides a detailed historical argument tracing beauty from Plato to Aquinas.

Beauty as Between (Beauty as Metaxu)

- Beauty resides **between** truth and goodness, holding them together like glue.
- The final chapter of Sammon's book is titled "*Beauty as Between*," summarizing its metaxu nature.

Sammon's Seven Characteristics of Beauty

1. **Beauty is transcendent plenitude**
2. Beauty overflows cognition, an excess of intelligibility.
3. **Beauty is a principle of determination**
4. Makes things present and discernible, gives clarity and shine.
5. **Beauty is the good becoming true**
6. Relevance connects what's true and good for you.
7. **Beauty enables anagoge (intellectual ascension)**
8. Powers cognitive ascent.
9. **Beauty is intelligibility prior to determination**
10. Ontological excess prior to cognition; mysterious plenitude.
11. **Beauty is the whole in the part**
12. Emphasized by Spinoza: each part is in every whole and vice versa.
13. Intellectual beauty as seen in *scientia intuitiva*.
14. Mutual interpenetration between cognition and being.
15. **Beauty is the community of being**
16. Derived from "common unity," i.e., participation in the One.

17. Has political and cultural implications for how we relate.

The Turn to D.C. Schindler

- Schindler's book chapter: *The Primacy of Beauty, The Centrality of Goodness, and The Ultimacy of Truth* (2013)
- Developed further in *Love and the Postmodern Predicament* (2018)

Schindler's Influences

- William Desmond (Being as metaxu)
- Heidegger (Truth as aletheia)
- von Balthasar (Beauty as theological core)
- Aquinas (Good, True, Beautiful)

Schindler's Framework: Primacy, Centrality, Ultimacy

- **Beauty:** The primacy of experience; prepares and motivates reason
- **Goodness:** The centrality of being; fullness and anagoge
- **Truth:** The ultimacy; realization and correspondence

Love and Being

- Love is **not** emotion — it's an **existential mode** of reciprocal opening.
- **Falling in love with being** is central to solving the meaning crisis.
- Not about loving every *thing*, but about loving *being itself*.

Propositions Cannot Solve the Meaning Crisis

- Propositional knowing is insufficient.
- Meaning arises from non-propositional knowing:
- Participatory, perspectival, procedural.
- **Love** is the mode that binds non-egoic connectedness to the most real.

Sacredness Through Beauty and Love

- Sacredness: Connection to what is most real, transformative, and normative.
- "*Beauty is a foretaste of being's good truth.*" — D.C. Schindler
- Through beauty, we attune the soul to reality.
- **Reciprocal indwelling**: Being and loving are fused.

Recovering Beauty

- Recovery isn't just *getting back* — it's *re-seeing*.
- Tolkien's idea of recovery: adopting new lenses to return and see home anew.
- Art, poetry, and myth help us **recover reality**.

Creation, Giving, and Making Love

- Beyond having and being modes — a **co-creative mode**.
- Making love is not making an object — it's reciprocal transformation.
- Shared reverence for the relationship's beauty sustains commitment.

Collective Consciousness?

- Rover scientists: embody imaginal identity with machine.
- Group intelligence arises — **collective intelligence**, not necessarily **collective consciousness**.
- Extended mind theory: cognitive agency distributed across systems.

Existence, God, and the One

- *Al-wujud al-ladhi la yujad* — "the existence that does not exist"
- The One is pure **relationality**, not a substance.
- Dissolve the question: existence doesn't have to mean objecthood.

Beauty and Art

- Beauty not in the object or the subject but **in the relation**.
- Latent beauty exists in potential relational structure — not as a property.

Deconstruction and Relevance Realization

- Derrida's *différance* = Vervaeke's **relevance realization**
 - Derrida rightly critiques propositional tyranny.
 - But relevance realization isn't trapped in semiotic deferral.
 - You can deconstruct postmodernism itself.
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Final Message:

To overcome nihilism, disconnection, and the crises of modernity, we must learn to fall deeply in love with **being itself**. Beauty is not ornamental — it is essential. It is the bridge that binds goodness and truth. Through beauty, we participate in being. Through love, we realize beauty. This is the recovery of cosmos — a world not of things, but of sacred relations.

Central Practice:

Fall in love with being. Live the solution, not just think it.