

The mystery of the subjunctive gnōi of Plato's *Symposium* 211c8

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This essay is concerned, primarily, with the interpretation of the climax of the major mystery of Plato's *Symposium*. I follow the text of Burnet, namely the reading of the infinitive teleutēsai (221d7) and the subjunctive gnōi (c8). First of all, I make it clear that the description of the major mystery is divided into two distinctive versions (210a4-211b5 and 211b5-d1). But the latter is not the recapitulation of the former. The first version starts with 'dei' which binds the first version as a whole. And the conditional, 'ean orthōs hēgētai' (210a6) means that its result sentence expresses general truth. Therefore the first version says that there are 'right ways' to follow for anyone who wants to understand the eros and beauty, namely anyone who accepts the philosophy of Diotima (Plato). It is a general rule-description.

On the other hand, the second version begins with 'hotan dē tis'. This 'dē tis' means that the speaker has someone definite in mind, but does not intend to express it. The person Diotima has in mind is Socrates who has accepted the invitation of Diotima. So the second version is a description, using infinitives, of the behaviours of Socrates for whom Diotima has personal care. Its final words are 'kai gnōi' (211c8). This independent subjunctive I take as 'Anticipatory, Homeric Subjunctive'.

This subjunctive means future, though differently from indicative future. I have found the hidden main sentence of this subjunctive. It is 'I expect or hope' which is not expressed but kept deep in the mind of Diotima. Therefore the future, 'he will know the beautiful.' is covered by the subjective expectation of Diotima. This means that even Diotima does not know the future of Socrates even if he climbs the upstairs in the right ways. Will he know (encounter) the beauty itself or not? All which it means is that the final finality of the major mystery lies beyond our human capability. Our righteousness in this way of inquiry into the beauty itself does not determine or guarantee our final success. Historical Parmenides made it definite that avenging Justice holds the key of the gate of Day (1.14). The use of anticipatory subjunctive shows, in a humble way, Diotima's hope, expectation and faith for philosophy and its Ground.

The end of mystery (teleutēsai. 221d7) does not mean 'end' in the ordinary sense. When we finish our work, then we turn towards different things, because we have thought that there remains nothing important to be done or thought about. But the end of doing philosophy is not an end in a definite sense. The finality of the major mystery as inquiry into the mystery of the good-beautiful is 'open-ended end'.