

The minutes of the dissertation defence

Candidate: Mgr. Ota Gál
Born: 6. 2. 1984
Discipline: Philosophy
Thesis title: "Beauty as Unity in Multiplicity in Plotinus"
Thesis language: English
Defence language: English
Supervisors: Doc. MUDr. Štěpán Špinka Ph.D. (UK); Prof. Filip Karfík, Ph.D. (UF)
Opponents: Prof. Riccardo Chiaradonna
Prof. Dr. Christian Tornau
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Defence place: FF UK, nám. Jana Palacha 2, Praha 1, CZ
Chair: Prof. Lenka Karfíková, Dr. theol. (UK)
Persons present: members of the examination board: Lenka Karfíková (chairman), Štěpán Špinka, Radek Chlup (representants of UK); Dominic O'Meara, Filip Karfík (representants of UF); Christian Tornau (external opponent); Ota Gál, Ondřej Krása (recorder), public.

14:00 The chair of the board Lenka Karfíková starts the defence, introduces members of the board present, opponent present, supervisors, and Ota Gál.

14:02 **Štěpán Špinka** introduces Ota Gál, his curriculum vitae and his publications.

14:05 **Ota Gál** thanks supervisors and opponents and summarises his thesis. The thesis investigates Plotinus' concept of beauty. The cause of beauty in the sensible world is intelligible beauty: Bodies get their beauty from Intellect and from soul, because soul mediates *logoi* to bodies, but *logoi* nevertheless come from Intellect. The soul becomes beautiful by partaking in Intellect, which unifies it. The primary seat of beauty is Intellect, because it is specific unity in multiplicity. There are five perspectives on the unity of multiplicity of Intellect: nature of intelligible objects, hierarchy within the intelligibles, the act of intellection, arithmetic structure of Intellect, genesis of unity in multiplicity. Beauty of Intellect is derived from the Good, but not in the same sense as everything else, but it is in fact manifestation of the Good. The Good shines on Intellect and its light is what allows Intellect to be seen as truly beautiful. The true and primary beauty in Intellect is consequently unity in multiplicity *illuminated* by the Good, and the beauty has thus referential character, it refers to the Good.

We have to differentiate beauty from other similar predicates applied to Intellect (life, the highest kinds, etc.). Life depicts Intellect in its birth giving, beauty in its birth, life presents it in its outpouring, in its descent, beauty refers to its source, and presents Intellect in its ascent. The highest kinds explain structural relations within Intellect, and are a part of a horizontally oriented view of Intellect; beauty belongs to a vertically oriented description, and beauty without horizontal reference to the Good, i.e. beauty as non-illuminated unity in multiplicity, is painful and shocking, or boring. The monad cannot be beautiful, because it is not multiple, and therefore cannot be illuminated unity in multiplicity. The notion of number describes inner structure of Intellect and characterises Intellect horizontally and therefore cannot be beauty. Predicates such as intellection, actuality, and eternity all try to capture how Intellect is what it is, and are not vertical descriptions of Intellect and therefore cannot be identified with beauty.

The primary seat of beauty is Intellect. However, the Good possesses beauty of another kind, beauty above beauty, beauty that is the principle of beauty. Beauty belongs to the group of predicates about the Good, which shares asymmetrical appropriateness as compared to their opposites.

Beauty is the manifestation of the Good, it is the Good in another. Beauty is manifest promise of the Good, which allows us to glimpse what we are always looking for. Beauty may not only motivate the ascent to the Good but it also in a sense may bind us to itself because it is so impressive.

14:15 **Štěpán Špinka** summarises the most important claims of the thesis. He asks several questions and raises some problems: To what extent can we say that 'Intellect itself' is 'non-illuminated'? Could it not be that this hypothetical 'non-illuminated state' of Intellect consists merely in the way some individual souls relate to it, in their (erroneous) understanding of it? And why is this non-illuminated Intellect not only 'boring' but also 'painful' and 'shocking'? Distinction between the horizontal and vertical predicates of Intellect is to some extent too general and schematic. As Ota Gal himself admits (see footnote 179), this distinction fails when we realise that in Plotinus' description of the genesis of Intellect, the highest kinds, especially Motion and the Other, also play a significant role. The supreme *genera* can thus characterise not only the horizontal or internal structure of Intellect but also its constitution in its

vertical relation to the One. In what sense can we speak of the horizontal structure of Intellect without its vertical relation to the One? What exactly is unifying characteristic of the third group of predicates (intellection, actuality, eternity, etc.)? According to Ota Gal, they 'try to capture "how Intellect is what it is"' (p. 186). What does it exactly mean and how this group of predicates distinguishes from the first two?

According to Štěpán Špinka, Ota Gal's thesis follows its subject throughout. From a formal perspective, it is written in a clear language, it is well structured, and its composition has understandable inner logic. Despite relative brevity, it attests not only to very good knowledge of Plotinus' work and familiarity with secondary literature, but also to Ota Gal's ability to interpret Plotinus's work independently and systematically. Some parts of the thesis are rather "paraphrastic". In a vast majority of cases, however, the paraphrases of Plotinus' text are accurate and ultimately mostly useful. In some parts, the thesis is somewhat schematic, and we see repeated defence of previously known and defended claims, especially the claim beauty is 'unity in multiplicity'. In the end, however, thanks to many excellent interpretations, the thesis avoids the danger of schematic exposition and offers a non-trivial and many-layered analysis of Plotinus' conception of beauty. The thesis is an original contribution to current Plotinian studies. The central claim of the thesis opens some further questions and would profit from increased focus on Plotinus' position within the historical context and from a more detailed discussion of differences between the interpretation offered in this thesis and possible alternative positions. Nevertheless, the main claim is defended convincingly and offers new valuable perspectives on using the concept of beauty as a key to better understanding of Plotinus' philosophy as a whole.

Ota Gal's dissertation convincingly attests to the author's philosophical erudition and requisite academic competence. Therefore, Štěpán Špinka recommends it for a defence and proposes the grade *insigni cum laude*.

14:30 **Filip Karfík**. Main question of the thesis: What is beauty? Beauty is, according to Ota Gál, specific *unitas multiplex* of Intellect. Beauty is light emanating from the Good and illuminating other things, especially Intellect. Beauty is not a form, beauty consists in the relation of form to that from which it derives. There are two concepts of beauty in the thesis: beauty as non-illuminated unity in multiplicity, and beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity, and the former is conceived as a prerequisite of the latter, the latter being the true and primary beauty. Why it is that Intellect is non-illuminated on one occasion and illuminated on another? Is not non-illuminated Intellect based only on the possibility for the soul to conceive Intellect in defective way? Is the change from *unitas multiplex* to the illuminated *unitas multiplex* an evidence of the change in Ota Gál's interpretation of Plotinus or an evidence of the change in Plotinus' thinking about the subject? To what extent is beauty internal to Intellect and to what extent is it necessarily dependent on the relation of soul to Intellect?

14:40 **Christian Tornau**. Great advantage of the thesis is that it goes well beyond traditional Plotinus' treatises on beauty and develops metaphysics of beauty. The thesis is an original contribution to Plotinian scholarship, it has no relevant parallel in recent studies on the subject and furthers Plotinian studies considerably.

Questions: What is the precise relation of the concept of beauty in the treatise I.6 to the erotic desire? Can the Good be loved by human beings as beautiful? It seems as if the good and the beautiful are sometimes merged. Would you reconsider your interpretation of I.6 from the viewpoint of your later analysis of beauty as an illuminated unity in multiplicity?

Beauty can distract us, lead us astray, it can produce intense emotional reactions: it can be striking, painful, boring, and shocking. Why connect these effects of beauty with the non-illuminated unity in multiplicity?

Plotinus took himself to be, first and foremost, an exegete of Plato. Ota Gál does not interpret Plotinus theory of beauty as an exegetical effort, despite the fact that his thesis might benefit from seeing Plotinus' beauty as a response to several exegetical problems in Plato.

On what ground would you reject alternative interpretation of *amorfon eidos* as being formless because not having bodily shape?

Christian Tornau recommends the submitted dissertation for a defence with the grade of *insigni cum laude*.

14:50 Lenka Karfíková summarises the report of **Riccardo Chiaradonna** (Prof. Chiaradonna was absent at the defence due to his illness). The thesis provides comprehensive outline of Plotinus' metaphysics from a specific point of view. The work is based on an extensive knowledge of Plotinus' treatises and on an adequate knowledge of the critical debate. Whilst the thesis suffers from certain minor flaws, the overall evaluation is positive: this is a useful work, which sheds light on several aspects of Plotinus' philosophy.

The thesis suffers from a certain "paraphrastic" approach, and therefore some important issues in Plotinus are mentioned, rather than really analysed. This is not to downplay Ota Gál's contribution on a number of issues, where

is analysis is interesting and original (e.g. relation between the account of number and that of supreme genera, relation between life and beauty).

Plotinus uses the relation between single theorems and science as a whole in order to replace Aristotle's genus-species relation. However, is there any internal tension in Plotinus' remarks? At VI.2 the highest kinds are not only genera, but also principles, but how is this compatible with what Ota Gál correctly says about the differentiation in Intellect based on the metaphor of science and its theorems (p. 53)?

Can Ota Gál explain further his reading of Plotinus' so-called *Großschrift* (Harders' hypothesis, which Ota Gál accepts, has been challenged by J.-M. Narbonne and C. D'Ancona). For example: how would Ota Gál explain Plotinus' notion of productive contemplation in treatise III.8 against the background of Aristotle's views about the status of art and *poiésis*?

Ota Gál's paraphrase of VI.7.1–2 is generally correct, but remains too quick and superficial. Plotinus claims that if we unfold each and every form back upon itself, we shall discover its cause in it. How is Plotinus' account of intelligible being precisely related to Aristotle's account of form as cause? Can Ota Gál say something more about Plotinus' model of causation and its philosophical background (Plato, Aristotle, maybe the Stoics)?

Riccardo Chiaradonna recommends the submitted dissertation for a defence.

15:00 Ota Gál thanks the opponents and supervisors for their reports.

Reply to the report of Riccardo Chiaradonna.

1. *Großschrift*. I agree with many comments made by Narbonne, but I do not think they are mostly in conflict with my own views: My opinion is not that *Großschrift* is one single treatise, rather I focus on the continuity of Plotinus' thought regarding the problems he deals with in those treatises. Harder's position is a bit bizarre (Porphyry himself cutting the treatise with scissors in his hands), but this cannot cloud the hard core of Harder's claim which is based on the text of 30–33 and which neither Narbonne, nor D'Ancona comment on: III.8 is on contemplation and V.8 starts by asking how to attain contemplation of Intellect and ends by asking whether this was enough or whether we should take another way, like this one: V.5. This treatise ends with a summary that *to kalon* from V.8 and *ta onta* from V.5 must come from the Good (causality being a main topic in III.8); this is the background of the debate with the Gnostics, as is again attested by the beginning of II.9, where we find a brief summary of what the Good (from III.8 and V.5), the Intellect (V.8 and V.5) and soul (from III.8) are, and the attack against the Gnostics largely relies on the idea of continuity (from III.8). Narbonne claims that to say that the *Großschrift* is a single treatise against the Gnostics equals to not seeing forest because of the trees. Narbonne wants to emphasise the autonomy of each individual treatise of the *Großschrift*. I am myself a bit afraid that Narbonne does not see the forest because of the trees (forest stands for the context of treatises). My proposal is to focus both on the forest and the trees.

D'Ancona claims that the focus of III.8 is causality, not the debate with the Gnostics. I agree, but without causality, the arguments against the Gnostics do not work.

I think there is a more or less strong textual evidence for the continuity of Plotinus' thought in treatises 30–33. This continuity does not necessarily imply the existence of a *Großschrift* cut in pieces with scissors in Porphyry's own hands. However, such continuity of thought in my reading indicates that in this period, Plotinus was dealing with a bundle of interconnected topics like the true nature of the intelligible and what this means for other levels of reality. This is crucial for the debate with the Gnostics, because they despise the bodily world since they do not understand that it is an image of the intelligible.

Nevertheless, to balance my answer, I did have doubts about the project of a *Großschrift* when I was working on these chapters some years ago. However, I concluded then and I still do, that this is Plotinus: he is always dragged to various other problems and discusses with several opponents/counter positions at the same time.

2. Theorems–science vs. species–genera. This topic is very difficult and I intentionally tried to avoid going into this in my thesis, because it would necessitate an extensive discussion of Plotinus' understanding of *dynamis* and *energeia*, which would be a major digression from the topic of my thesis. Therefore, I decided to rely on the intuitive understanding of the science–theorem simile and the comments of Emilsson, who in turn follows prof. Tornau's paper. In order to address this problem, let me start with Aristotle: In several places of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle addresses a question, which Plotinus must have understood as threatening his understanding of the Intellect: if that, which is thought, can be said to have parts, Intellect would change when passing from one part to the other. Moreover, the intelligible as having no matter, cannot be divided. Plotinus

will react by qualifying the use of *dynamei-energeiai* distinction on Intellect as not proper and by introducing intelligible matter. Aristotle thus provides serious reasons for denying that Intellect has parts, and many of them are based on Aristotle's notions of *dynamis* and *energeia*. In order to avoid these consequences, Plotinus reinterprets these notions in II.5, and shows that there is an important distinction between that, which is *dynamei* and *energeiai* on the one hand and that, which is *dynamis* and *energeia* on the other, and only the latter pair can be used appropriately with regard to Intellect. It seems to me, nevertheless, that the distinction of *dynamei* and *energeiai* is a means of talking about the Intellect which is dear to Plotinus, as can be seen from the example of science and its theorems. A theorem as a theorem is a piece of knowledge; what differentiates it as a piece of knowledge from other propositions is the fact that it is linked with all the other theorems of science and with the science as a whole. It makes sense as a theorem only against the background of the whole science and in relation to all the other theorems. Theorem is actually what it is, and potentially the whole of the science. But in Intellect everything is actuality itself and therefore Plotinus utilises the other meaning of *dynamis*: someone who understands a theorem as a theorem has the power (*dynamis*) to explain the theorem within the whole science, i.e. also the other theorems. And vice versa, the whole science is potentially all the theorems, i.e. it is in the power of the one who has the knowledge corresponding to the whole science to actualise it in each of its theorems. Within the Intellect, this seems to imply that the relation of a genus (science) to its species (particular sciences) is precisely this, so that a genus-species relation is an integral part of the science-theorem simile and should be interpreted within this context as suggesting that a genus has the power to generate its species and that a species is actual as an expression of its genus, which is, however, potentially present in the species, because as a species it makes sense only against the background of the genus. Plotinus does rely on Plato more than on Aristotle when introducing the species-genera model and in Plato, the relation of everything to everything else is also implied, because everything is derived from the highest kinds, which shows that there are different types of relations between the forms, and that understanding a form always implies understanding it within the structure of the intelligible as that what it is in itself and as that what is different from everything else. In Plato, the idea of *megista gené* being principles is also implicitly present, although it is not clear whether they are still to be considered genera in the ordinary sense, as Plotinus seems to suggest.

In my understanding, being simultaneously a genus and a principle implies the following change in the understanding of genera-species relationship: every species is related to the highest kinds indirectly through the genera-species structure as far as they are *gené*, and directly as far as they are principles. So there is a double link which could be compared to the relation of a university scientist to the dean who is the ultimate superordinate of the faculty, so that if you have a complaint for example, you do not go directly to the dean but talk to your direct superordinate, who then talks to the vice-dean and then to the dean. But if this scientist is at the same time involved in a research project lead by the dean, he talks directly to the dean. Similarly, as far as the being/movement/rest/otherness/sameness of each form is concerned, they relate directly to the dean, i.e. to the highest kinds, although in other aspects (like that of being a rational as opposed to an irrational animal), it is only through their genera.

In any case, I think there is indeed a serious problem in Plotinus if one tries to combine all the claims: I do not think he is really able to explain how individual forms differ from each other, since he basically dismisses all possibilities how to distinguish between them: It is not by being in a different place or position in the time line, of course. Rather, they must be different by their "position" in the genus-species hierarchy. Nevertheless, how can this be the case, if everything is everything else and the whole, and if you, at the same time, dismiss the *dynamei-energeiai* pair as improper to Intellect and claim that everything is actuality in Intellect? What is this "position" in the hierarchy?

One possibility might be to say that all forms differ by their *dynamis*, i.e. the power to be actualised as different in what is below, but this "becoming itself in another" does not sound Plotinian to me.

Of course, there is the cheap answer: our soul (or at least its discursive part) cannot comprehend the true unity and multiplicity of Intellect. But this is not really helpful.

Therefore, to conclude, my answer to the question how there can be simultaneously a genus-species relation, a form-principle relation and a form-genus/principle relation in Intellect, is basically the same: I do not know, since none of these relations alone is described enough to be able to answer this and maybe it is not even possible to do so on the level of discursive soul.

Causality in Plotinus and its philosophical background. Plato in the *Phaedo* distinguishes material co-causes without which true causes could not act in the sensible world; teleological cause which is linked to the activity of *Nous* which orders the world according to what is best for each and for all, thus binding everything together; forms as simple causes which are introduced as a safe hypothesis trying to avoid perplexities linked with material causes and which are to be understood as rational structure of the world; mediating causes such as mathematical entities, elements and soul which enable the sensible to participate in the forms. In the *Timaeus* there is a similar causal structure as in *Phaedo*: in a way, the material (an image of the intelligible determined by the demiurge) is involved in the explanation of things as necessity; teleological explanation is linked with the good nature of the demiurge and with the fact known from the *Republic* that knowledge of the forms is possible only in the light of the Good; the intelligible paradigm is that which all things participate in and according to which the demiurge further determines them; he does that through soul as something created from an intermediary material.

Aristotle follows Plato in taking the example of the production of a *technités* as the starting point. *Aition* is predicated about that (*Met.* I.3, *Met.* IV.2 and *Phys.* II.3): 1. from which something comes to be as from a part (sculpture from metal) = material cause; 2. which is *eidos*, *paradeigma*, *úsia* and *to ti én einai* and its genus (this cause is responsible for a thing's completeness, composition and form, the cause of an octave is the ratio 2:1) = formal cause; 3. which is the source of change/rest (advisor, father) = efficient cause; 4. for which a thing is done (health causes a walk) – final cause (this concept is, moreover, closely linked to the *dynamis-energeia* distinction, since *energeia* is the telos of all *dynamis*). In biology, the distinction derived from *techné* does not fit completely and Aristotle in fact often uses fewer causes because for a living thing, its form, *telos* and agent are often one and the same: a tree is the formal, efficient and final cause of a seed. When Aristotle describes the generation of animals, he sometimes has a tendency to talk about these three causes as of active and belonging to the father and of the material as passive as belonging to the mother.

The Stoics follow Aristotle's twofold understanding of causation from his biological texts, or actually they follow Plato's claim from the *Sophist* according to which the criterion of existence is the ability of acting or being acted upon. This is the case of bodies only, which are therefore the only thing that really exists (as opposed to the incorporeals which only subsist). Cause is "that because of which" and it is always a body, which brings about in another body an incorporeal predicate (*lekton*): a scalpel (body) causes a predicate (being cut) in a body (flesh). In order for a thing to be affected by a cause, it must be suited to receive this activity (e.g. a wet wood does not burn as opposed to dry). In this sense, the Stoics distinguish between "perfect and primary" and "auxiliary and proximate" causes, the former being the dryness of the wood (or canonically the roundness of a rolling cylinder), whereas the latter fire (or the push that starts its rolling). The inner structuring of a thing is in this sense more important than the push of the auxiliary and proximate cause. Moreover, the inner structuring of a thing is itself perceived as a kind of cause. For the Stoics, a body is matter held together by *pneuma*, i.e. by a specific mixture of (hot) fire and (cold) air, which is in tonic motion, where fire expands, thus constituting size and qualities, and air contracts, which qualifies the body as existent and as one. The Stoics actually call this type of holding together of a body a sustaining cause. From the global perspective of the cosmos, which is bodily and is in tonic motion, one can differentiate between two aspects of the same substance: an active (*logos*) and a passive (*mater*), i.e. causality is conceived of as inner structuring of the body itself.

In Plotinus the concept of causality is reinterpreted in terms of the double activity, i.e. everything is primarily itself and as such, i.e. as a completed activity, it produces a second activity, which turns back to its source and is in this way established as a different, yet somehow similar image of its paradigm. Moreover, as is well known and also to some extent described in my thesis, the second activity comes to be from the first without any effort or intention and comes to be spontaneously and automatically. Plotinus also describes this model of causation as that of productive contemplation. In Plotinus there is only vertical causality (downwards causality); material causes exist only in relative sense. There is no horizontal causality, but only a vertical one, namely a top-down one. In Aristotle's terms, this kind of vertical causality is no doubt formal, but also efficient and final. Material cause, however, can only be used imprecisely in Plotinus. Matter can only serve as a cause in as much as it is a form, and matter in the strict sense of absolute privation cannot be the cause of anything. The doctrine of the double activity is, of course, to some extent derived from both Plato and Aristotle: in Plato, one just has to lay emphasis on the double activity of the demiurge, who contemplates the forms and arranges everything accordingly, interpret some parts of the myth metaphorically (especially those implying successiveness and

reasoning in the activity of the demiurge) and merge the demiurge with the intelligible paradigm. From Aristotle, Plotinus utilises the vocabulary of two *energeiai*, and perhaps also that of first and second *dynamis* and *energeia* and Aristotle's terminology of an effect not being cut off from its source in some cases, like that of teaching. Moreover, something like a double act could be seen in the doing of the unmoved mover, who directs his activity at himself and yet, he still somehow manages to cause motion in the spheres, be it by the fact that he is a final cause, or even by affecting the spheres efficiently. With the Stoics, Plotinus seems to share the idea of a nexus of causes that are linked all together and dematerialises this idea so that in Intellect all things and their reason are identical.

Reply to the questions in the reports of **Christian Tornau**, **Štěpán Špinka** and **Filip Karfík**.

To what extent can we say that Intellect itself is non-illuminated? Does this consist merely in the way some souls erroneously understand it? It can be said only in a thought experiment, as Plotinus seems to suggest in VI.7. I do agree that seeing Intellect as non-illuminated is the case of an erroneous understanding of a soul. However, a rather precarious question is how this is in fact possible – a soul that sees Intellect unites with it, i.e. only Intellect may actually contemplate Intellect and a soul can see it only in as much as it unites with it. But if so, how can it be wrong about it? Being wrong and then seeing things correctly implies a change within Intellect, which is impossible. And even if being wrong could be somehow used for Intellect without implying a change, it would still not be proper, since non-illuminated Intellect does see beautiful things, just not the greatest. Therefore, there are rather two "parts" of Intellect, the sober and the drunk, which both eternally perform what they do (contemplate itself in the former case and transcend itself and perhaps relive its birth in the latter case). From the description of *henósis* in VI.7 and also in the most beautiful chapters of V.5, it seems that uniting with the Intellect does not necessarily imply uniting with that part of it, which looks beyond. I do not think that this can really be explained in the system, but it seems to be so nevertheless. In any case, a soul that unifies with the sober "part" of Intellect might afterwards reflect on this experience and come up with such an erroneous conception of Intellect. Or rather, the beauty seen in Intellect (even the non-illuminated one), is so great that it is very probable that the soul will be "seduced" to understand it as the greatest.

Why is the non-illuminated Intellect not only boring but also painful and shocking? How are these characteristics related? First I would like to point out that using boredom as an allusion on the *Phaedrus* might simply be considered a meaningless rhetorical figure. It is a matter of decision how seriously one wants to take it. However, I do want to take it seriously in some sense. My personal intuition, which I cannot prove, is that it is directed at Aristotle's account of God who thinks himself. As opposed to the Intellect of Plotinus, his thinking is somewhat empty, it does not think itself as all the intelligibles, i.e. as everything. Therefore, it is a good candidate for being boring. But perhaps even Intellect in Plotinus' sense may be boring similarly to a richly decorated house where one waits for its master, as presented in VI.7. Even everything, if observed eternally, is in a way boring if the guest does not encounter the force behind all the beautiful organisation of the house. How can it be shocking and painful? I think there is not only tension between being boring and painful/shocking, but also between painful and shocking. I think Plotinus refers to different types of experience with each of these adjectives. Shocking nature seems to me to denote Intellect's very deprivation of light, its simultaneous greatness and as if automaticity or as if non-organicity. What do I mean with this taking into consideration that Intellect is life itself? It is as if the already organized organism which deprived of life as the first emanation from the Good, remains a monstrous machine which may be fascinating in its complexity, but in a way also threatening in its as if inhumanity. On the other hand, pain seems to me to refer primarily to the unsatisfied need in us which is in its core always correctly directed at the Good so that even in Intellect, we somehow know that this cannot be the ultimate. The designation painful thus seems to refer to something like a subconscious experience, whereas shocking and boring rather to its conscious part (if the distinction between conscious and subconscious makes any sense here). Calling the non-illuminated Intellect boring and shocking could be perhaps understood as two sides of the same coin. How the soul reacts may depend in the end on its disposition in the sense of its relation to the organic/non-organic. I know that this is a pure psychologising, but I have nothing better to offer and it does seem to refer to some common experience – what some people are repelled by, some are attracted to.

Discussion.

Christian Tornau: Dissatisfied desire cannot be boring. There are two responses to perfectly structured being: Boredom, i.e. seeing being from the disinterested point of view (probably stoics), and being shocked, being in pain (being distracted), i.e. the interested point of view (Aristotle).

Filip Karfík: Beauty cannot be thought about without desire of the soul for the Good. Ota Gál: Desire of the soul has paradigm in desire of Intellect towards the Good. Filip Karfík: This desire of Intellect is not a desire for the beauty. Ota Gál: I agree, it is a paradigm of desire for the beauty.

Christian Tornau: Would you reconsider your interpretation of I.6 from the viewpoint of your later analysis of beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity? Ota Gál: I would like to reconsider I.6 from the viewpoint of my more advanced interpretation of beauty as illuminated unity in multiplicity.

Christian Tornau: Can you comment on the topic of Plato as an exegete of Plato? Ota Gál: In order to see the influence of Plato on Plotinus' theory of beauty, we would have to see what Plato means by beauty, which is very difficult topic. Štěpán Špinka: Why would this be necessary? Filip Karfík: Plotinus has to deal with specific utterances of Plato, so there is maybe no need to explicate Plato's doctrines on beauty, but only deal with the fact that Plotinus has to cope with these specific utterances. Ota Gál: When dealing with this issue, most of the commentators do not provide much more than the list of references to the dialogues of Plato. I think that if we want to really address the relationship of Plotinus and Plato, we would have to go into the details of the doctrines of Plato and Plotinus, because there are tensions between the two doctrines of beauty.

Dominic O'Meara: I often agree with Ota Gál's interpretation of Plotinus. I think that your arguments regarding *Großschrift* are right and fundamentals in Harder's interpretation are sound. I would suggest to put greater emphasis on different genres of different treatises. Do you think that the distinction between essential property and property with respect to something else can be applied to Plotinus' concept of beauty? Ota Gál: Yes, I think it could be applied. Dominic O'Meara: One is the source of everything else, but is not identical with everything else, so we need distinction between beauty and other predicates. Filip Karfík: Is beauty necessarily beauty for someone, or is there some beauty *per se*? Isn't beauty of something always beauty caused by something else and seen by someone else? Lenka Karfíková: What is the illumination, can you work out in some more detail the concept of illumination, which is central to your understanding of beauty? Is it connected to transparency of the higher in the lower? Ota Gál: It is the presence of higher in the lower, beauty is the presence of the Good.

Christian Tornau: *Kalos* can also mean perfect, right, reasonable, and it seems that this is the meaning of the term in certain contexts of the *Enneads*.

16:30 The chair of the board, Lenka Karfíková ended the discussion and the board initiated a private meeting on classification of the dissertation.

Result

16:40 The chair of the board announced to the student and persons present the result of the defence: The board voted by raising hands, number of the members of the board present: 5; positive votes 5, negative votes 0. The dissertation defence was classified *summa cum laude*, the thesis was previously classified *insigni cum laude*.

Recorder: Ondřej Krása

