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### Notes on Enn. I.1.4, 12–5, 7

*The development of the problems treated at 4, 12–5, 7 in earlier chapters.* Plotinus' discussion in the first half of the treatise is centered around the problem of the identity of the subject of the „affections”. This question is examined in the context of the broader issue of the relationship between the soul and the body. At the beginning of the treatise, Plotinus proposes three possible subjects of the affections: 1) the soul itself, 2) the soul using the body as an instrument, 3) the „mixture” (τὸ μῆγμα) of the soul and the body (1, 1–5). The portion of the text I am discussing belongs to the examination of the third option.

Later on, more refined suggestions as to the relationship between the soul and the body are made, all of them premised on the assumption that the soul and the body are in some way „mixed” (3, 18–26). Plotinus relies here, as he did in relation to the possible subjects of affections, on traditional philosophical doctrines. **(A)** The mixture of the soul and the body can be understood in terms of „blending” (κράσις), a Stoic theory according to which the components of the blend completely interpenetrate one another, while retaining their own nature. **(B)** The second suggestion is that the soul is „interwoven” (διαπλακεῖσα) through the body. This model is based on Plato's characterization of the relationship between the world-soul and the cosmic body (*Tim.* 36E2). **(C)–(D)** The soul can be regarded as the form (εἶδος) of the body. This Peripatetically-inspired suggestion comes in two versions: the soul is either a form not separate (οὐ κεχωρισμένον) from the body, or it is a form „controlling” (or: „in contact with”, ἐφαπτόμενον) the body (but separable from it), „like the pilot of a ship”. **(E)** The combination of **(C)** and **(D)**: one part of the soul is separate from the body, while another part is mixed with it in some way. It is useful to recall these distinctions, because – in contrast to the immediately preceding section (4, 1–10) which raises difficulties concerning the possibility of the „mixture” of the soul with the body quite generally, bracketing the differences between the various ways in which the mixing might take place – the argument to be discussed follows up some of the models envisaged at 3, 18–26.

*Where does the argument under scrutiny start?* We might think that 4, 10–12 (Ζητητέον δὲ καὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς μίξεως ...) is just one of the general difficulties concerning the possibility of „mixing”, because the particle used at 4, 12 (Τὸ δὲ „διαπλακεῖσα”) does not unequivocally signal that the new sentence elaborates on the previous one. Moreover, 4, 10–12 does raise a

general worry about „mixing”: perhaps the „mixing” of the soul with the body is as impossible as that of a „line” with „white”, because of their ontologically different natures. On the other hand, the argument of 4, 12 sqq. addresses the question of the ways in which the mixing might take place, and this topic is announced at 4, 10–11: „we should inquire the manner of the mixture (τὸν τρόπον τῆς μίξεως)”. For this reason, I prefer to read 4, 10–12 as a preface to the argument of 4, 12 ff.

*The aim of the argument.* Plotinus is here – as he was in the previous chapters already – at pains to show that the soul cannot be the proper subject of affections. More precisely, he sets out to argue that even if the soul constituted a mixture with the body in any of the ways of mixture specified, this would not entail its undergoing passive affections.

*What happens to the model of „blending”?* Somewhat surprisingly, the model of κράσις (option **A** in 3, 18–26) does not receive a separate treatment. It has been suggested that 4, 1–12 contains the examination of this hypothesis. However, Plotinus uses there the general term for „mixing” (μίγνυσθαι) rather than „blending” (κράσις). Other elements of the Stoic terminology of the κράσις theory are also absent (for instance, there is no reference to the „total” interpenetration, δι’ ὅλου). Finally, the arguments themselves do not address the specific aspects of the κράσις theory. The lack of an explicit treatment of „blending” might be explained in terms of Plotinus’ reservations about the materialistic Stoic account of the relationship between the soul and the body (cf. IV.7.8<sup>2</sup>). Perhaps he simply regarded this theory as unpromising. But this is not the whole story. I shall presently argue that the treatment of „blending” is incorporated into the discussion of „interweaving” in a modified form.

*Models of „mixing” I:* „interweaving” (4, 12–18 = option **B** in 3, 18–26). The first suggestion as to the way of „mixing” which is explicitly discussed in the text is that the soul is „woven together” (διαπλακεῖσα) with the body. As already mentioned, this word serves to describe the relationship between the world-soul and the body of the world in its original context (Plato, *Tim.* 36E2),<sup>1</sup> but it is transferred here to the relationship between the human soul and the body. Tantalizingly, Plotinus does not tell us much about the metaphysics of this model. In

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<sup>1</sup> *Tim.* 36D8–E5: Ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ νοῦν τῶ συνιστάντι πᾶσα ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς σύστασις ἐγεγένητο, μετὰ τοῦτο πᾶν τὸ σωματοειδὲς ἐντὸς αὐτῆς ἐτεκταίνεται καὶ μέσον μέση συναγαγὼν προσήρμοσεν· ἢ δ’ ἐκ μέσου πρὸς τὸν ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν πάντῃ διαπλακεῖσα κύκλω τε αὐτὸν ἔξωθεν περικαλύψασα, αὐτὴ ἐν αὐτῇ στρεφομένη, θείαν ἀρχὴν ἤρξατο ἀπαύστου καὶ ἔμφορος βίου πρὸς τὸν σύμπαντα χρόνον.

my view, he does not object to the idea of „interweaving” as such, nor does he engage in polemic against Plato. He avails himself of the same locution in his account of the cosmic movement.<sup>2</sup> What he does reject is *a certain understanding* of „interweaving”. He argues that this characterization of the relationship between the soul and the body does not entail that the soul must undergo the same affections as the body does with which it is „woven together”.

Plotinus uses here the terminology of the Stoic theory of „blending” (κράσις) at two points. 1) The soul „passes through” the body or „permeates” it (διαπεφοιτηκυῖαν, 4.14 f.), cf. Alexander’s description of the relationship of the active elements to the passive ones in his account of the Stoic theory of „blending” (διαπεφοιτηκέναι ὅλα δι’ ὅλων, *De mixt.* 218, 5). 2) The soul is „woven” through the „whole” body, or it is „totally” woven through it (δι’ ὅλου, 4, 16), cf. Alexander’s report on the Stoic analysis of the relationship between the soul and the body in terms of „blending”, *De mixt.* 217, 34 f.: τὴν ψυχὴν ... δι’ ὅλου τοῦ σώματος διήκειν ἐν τῇ μίξει τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸ. We might add a third parallel to the obvious ones. 3) Alexander also tells us that Chrysippus regarded the relationship of light and air as a case of „blending”.<sup>3</sup> It is well known that Plotinus frequently uses the analogy of light in expositions of his own psychological doctrine, but I believe that the Stoic doctrine reported by Alexander is also pertinent here. The Stoics hold that in blends the components retain their own natures.<sup>4</sup> In relation to the blend constituted by the light and the air, a stronger claim also seems plausible: the light illuminating the air does not necessarily share the *affections or states* of the latter (consider, for instance, temperature). It is this case from which Plotinus infers that the soul „will not experience the states of the body just because it is interwoven” (4, 15–18).

The view scrutinized in this section seems to be a Stoicizing Platonic doctrine of the relationship between the soul and the body which connects the Platonic idea of „interweaving” with some elements of the Stoic theory of „blending”. Is Plotinus correcting here some earlier Platonic view which comes too close to Stoic corporealism? Or does he himself combine Platonic and Stoic doctrines? However that might be, it is here that we find some reflexion on the model of „blending” (rather than in 4, 1–12). Plotinus seems to be treating model **A** („blending”) and **B** („interweaving”) together. Both models entail that the soul totally (δι’ ὅλου) pervades the body – an idea that is certainly attractive to Plotinus. But he signals by the use of the Platonic term „interweaving” that the corporealist approach of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Enn.* II.2.3, 1–3: τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ μὲν τις δύναμις ἡ ἐσχάτη ἀπὸ γῆς ἀρξαμένη καὶ δι’ ὅλου „διαπλεκεῖσά” ἐστίν.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander, *De mixt.* 218, 8–9: καὶ τὸ φῶς δὲ τῷ ἀέρι ὁ Χρυσίππος κινᾶσθαι λέγει.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, *De mixt.* 217, 35: σώζουσιν τὴν οἰκείαν οὐσίαν. Id., *ibid.*, 218, 5–6: σώζοντα τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν καὶ συνέχειαν.

original Stoic theory must be abandoned, and he argues that total interpenetration does not entail that the soul and the body share the same attributes.

Even so, Plotinus is not expounding here his own account of the soul–body relationship. Most importantly, he does not make clear that it is only some kind of „illumination” coming from the soul (rather than the soul itself) that pervades the body (cf. 7, 1–6).

*Models of „mixing” 2: the soul as separable form (4, 18–20 = option D in 3, 18–26).* The thesis that the soul is in the body „in the way that a form is in matter” is Aristotelian (*DA* 412a16–21). The first version of this thesis considered here, however, seems to be strikingly un-Aristotelian, at least from a modern point of view: Plotinus suggests that if soul is a substance, it must be a separable form (χωριστὸν εἶδος, 4, 19–20).<sup>5</sup> This suggestion is dealt with very briefly. The soul as a separable form is identified with „the user of the body”.<sup>6</sup> Plotinus has shown already that „the user of the body” cannot be the subject of the affections (3, 3–15). He leaves it here to the reader to draw the same conclusion.

It can be argued that he keeps his distance from the characterisation of the soul in terms of a form separable from the body as a general metaphysical thesis as well. The „separable form” mentioned here belongs to the same model as the „form controlling (or: in touch with) the body, like the pilot of a ship” (3, 20–21) does. The simile of the „pilot” (κυβερνήτης) recalls Aristotle’s cryptic remark: „it is not clear whether the soul may not be the actuality of its body in the sense in which the sailor is the actuality of the ship (ὥσπερ πλωτὴρ πλοίου)” (*DA* 413a8–9). Plotinus discusses the analogy of the pilot in an examination of the ways in which the soul might be in the body (IV.3.21, 3–11). In his eyes, it is a virtue of this analogy that it allows for the separation of the soul from the body.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, he objects that the analogy does not make clear whether the soul is purely incidentally in the body (presumably, he would answer this question in the affirmative); he also point out that the pilot is not present in the whole of the ship, while the soul is present in the whole of the body. It might be suspected that Plotinus adopts a similarly reserved attitude towards the thesis that the soul is a form separable from the body in our treatise, too.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> But he might be relying on Aristotle’s remarks about intellect (for instance, *DA* 413a3–7), and on his obscure analogy of the sailor and the ship (*DA* 413a8–9).

<sup>6</sup> The same identification can be found in relation to the „separate” (κεχωρισμένον) form at 3, 21 f.

<sup>7</sup> IV.3.21, 6 f.: χωριστήν δύνασθαι εἶναι τὴν ψυχὴν. This statement shows that the analogy of the pilot and the notion that the soul is a form separable from the body can be connected.

<sup>8</sup> For a more positive use of the analogy of the pilot in a different context see IV.3.17,21–28.

*Models of „mixing” 3: the soul as inseparable form (4, 20–27 = option C in 3, 18–26).* In the examination of the second version of the hylomorphic thesis, Plotinus follows Aristotle more closely. The notion that the soul and the body form an inseparable unity is illustrated by the analogy of the axe (4, 20 f.). This simile serves the same purpose in Aristotle: if an axe were a natural body, „being an axe” (τὸ πελέκει εἶναι) would be its substance and its soul, and if that were separated from it, it would cease to be an axe, except in name (*DA* II.1, 412b11–15).<sup>9</sup>

An earlier part of Aristotle’s argument, *DA* I.4, 408a34–b18, is also highly relevant to Plotinus’ concerns here. Aristotle grants that the affections or emotions, sense-perception and thinking qualify as „motions”, and that they are due to the soul (ὕπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς, τῆ ψυχῆ, 408b7 and 15). He points out, however, that the proper subject of these activities is „the man” (ἄνθρωπος) rather than the soul: „to say that it is the soul which is angry is as if we were to say that it is the soul that weaves or builds houses” (408b11–13, partially quoted by Plotinus at 4, 26). Plotinus advances a similar analysis in terms of the simile of the axe (4, 21–22): it is the „compound”, „the iron shaped in this particular way” that performs activities of an axe, though the axe is capable of doing so by virtue of its „shape”. By the same token, the subject of the affections like desiring or being in pain is the „animal” (τὸ ζῷον) rather than the soul (4, 25–27). Plotinus’ conclusions seem to be perfectly Aristotelian. Even his further claim that „we shall attribute all the common affections rather to the body, but to a body ’of a specific kind’, ’formed by nature’, ’having organs’, ’having life potentially’”<sup>10</sup> (4, 23–25) can be understood in terms of an inference drawn from Aristotle’s account. If the soul is exempt from all motions or changes, and if it merely serves as their starting–point or terminal point (*DA* I.4, 408b15–18), then it must be the body that undergoes the changes or passive affections bound up with life functions.

To sum up, Plotinus has shown in this part of his argument that hylomorphism, even if we interpret it most strictly, does not imply that the soul is the subject of affections. Needless to say that he strongly opposes hylomorphism as a general explanation of the relationship of the soul to the body (cf. IV.7.8<sup>5</sup>, IV.3.20, 36–41).

There is, however, an important facet to the model scrutinized here that is incorporated into Plotinus’ own account of the affections and, more generally, into his metaphysics of the soul, namely, the claim that the subject of the affections is the *animal* (4, 27: τὸ ζῷον). It is in

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<sup>9</sup> Plotinus replaces „being an axe” with „shape” (σχῆμα). Cf. Alexander, *Mantissa* 102, 23–27. Aristotle also uses the word in relation to the unity of the wax with its „shape”, *DA* II.1, 412b6–8.

<sup>10</sup> The epithets of the body are taken from various formulations of Aristotle’s general description of the soul (*DA* II.1, 412a27–28, 412b5–6, 412a19–21).

the present section that this crucial concept is introduced.<sup>11</sup> It is important to observe that Plotinus departs from Aristotle in this point: while Aristotle specifies „the man” as the proper subject of the affections (*DA* I.4, 408b14 f.), Plotinus identifies the subject of the affections as „the animal”. Alexander, who also paraphrases Aristotle’s relevant argument, uses „the man” and „the living being” (τὸ ζῶον) interchangeably in this context (*De anima*, 23, 6–18). Plotinus’ formulation is probably motivated by his intention to identify „man” with the rational soul in his own account (cf. 7, 18–25; 10, 7). Accordingly, he will confine the notion of „living being” or „animal” to the compound of the body and some kind of „illumination” coming from the soul (cf. 7, 7). By this move, he completely changes the sense of Aristotle’s words which he approvingly quoted.

*Further questions concerning the „animal”, the subject of the affections, and concerning the soul* (5, 1–7). Only the last model of „mixing” has yielded a plausible candidate, the „animal”, for the subject of the affections. At the beginning of chapter 5, Plotinus turns to this notion. He proposes three hypotheses as to the identity of the „animal”. 1) The animal could be identified with the „qualified body” (τὸ σῶμα δεῖ ... τὸ τοιόνδε, 5, 1; cf. Aristotle, *DA* 412a16–17). It should be noted that the „qualified body” plays a crucial role in Plotinus’ earlier, penetrating treatment of the affections (IV.4.18–21 and 28). 2) Another possibility is that the animal is simply „the sum” of the soul and the body (τὸ κοινόν, 5, 2; cf. Aristotle, *DA* 408b29). This sense of the term τὸ κοινόν can only be inferred from the contrast with the next option. 3) Finally, the animal can be understood in terms of a third entity endowed with a nature of its own, distinct from both the soul and the body, from which it has been produced (ἕτερόν τι τρίτον ἐξ ἀμφοῖν γεγενημένον, 5, 2). In the following chapters these suggestions are not discussed separately. In one way or in another all of them have a role to play in Plotinus’ positive theory. A detailed examination of their reinterpretation in the course of the argument would lead us too far afield.

A further question raised here concerns the relationship of the soul to the „animal”, the subject of the affections. Two main hypotheses are envisaged. 1) The soul remains free of the affections which it brings about in another thing. In other words, the soul can function as the *cause* of the affections without being their *subject*. 2) The soul is affected itself together with the body. Within the latter hypothesis, two possibilities are distinguished: the soul

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<sup>11</sup> See, however, 3, 2–3, quoting Plato’s *Phaedrus* 246c5.

experiences either the same affection as the body does, or a similar but distinct one. Plotinus will carefully examine the second hypothesis, but he wholeheartedly embraces the first one.

*Concluding remark on the character of Plotinus' dialectic in this part.* Plotinus draws his inspiration from Platonic, Peripatetic and Stoic sources. However, his procedure is far removed from doxography or school polemic. Nor does he employ the full arsenal of his aporetic method for which he provided an example in his treatise *On eternity and time* (III.7). For instance, he does not invoke „common notions”; he does not keep the aporetic and the constructive stages of the enquiry strictly apart; the catalogue of the views of his predecessors is less systematic, and he does not seem to be very keen on giving an „internal” refutation of the views examined. My impression is that he is looking for ideas in the traditional material that can be put to positive use in his own theory, and he takes less interest here in the refutation of rival views.