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ARTYKUŁY I ROZPRAWY

The Neophenomenological Theory of Subjectivity as a Tool for Comparative Studies

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ABSTRACT

The conception of subjectivity developed by the German philosopher Hermann Schmitz (1928–) is especially suitable for cross-cultural investigations because its foundations lie in human experiences that are basic and universal. The paper has two aims. Firstly, to give an outline of Schmitz's theory. Secondly, to show its usefulness (and its limits) by interpreting some Greek and Indian philosophemes which, at the same time, represent certain main approaches to the problem of subjectivity.

0. INTRODUCTION

Most historians of philosophy would certainly agree that "subjectivity" is one of the main themes in the Western philosophical tradition since the time of Descartes. But the understanding of this term differs so widely that each author dealing with this topic should very clearly define what exactly he is talking about. So, in the first part of this paper I am going to present the neophenomenological theory of subjectivity developed by the German philosopher Hermann Schmitz in order to establish the notion of "subjectivity" that is at stake here. In the second part, the usefulness of this conceptual framework for cross-cultural investigations is discussed in general, and applied, in particular, to certain Stoic and Buddhist ideas.[1]

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[1] For technical reasons a somewhat simplified transcription for Greek, Pali and Sanskrit terms will be used in the following.

1. THE NEOPHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORY OF SUBJECTIVITY

Hermann Schmitz (born in 1928) is the founding father and main representative of the neophenomenological school.[2] This variety of phenomenology is based on a radically empirical understanding of Husserl's slogan "Back to the things themselves!", and a relativistic notion of what a phenomenon is. Its conception of subjectivity betrays influences of existentialism; in this, and not only in this, respect it is indebted to Martin Heidegger's earlier work (more or less up to, and including *Sein und Zeit*). Nevertheless, Schmitz's style differs quite markedly from Heidegger's; in certain fields he employs methods more typical of the analytical tradition.

In order to explain the neophenomenological notion of subjectivity, it may be useful to start with a more special phenomenon: self-consciousness. Generally, one can define self-consciousness as the relationship of knowledge (or some relationship implying knowledge) of a subject to itself. This structure has been dealt with by philosophers — both in Western and in non-Western traditions — since antiquity, and has seemed extraordinary or even paradoxical to many. But what exactly is problematic about self-consciousness? Traditionally, the main focus has been on the question, how it is possible that subject and object are at the same time two entities (the knower and the known) and identical with each other (*per definitionem*, because we are talking about s e l f-consciousness). But this is not the main difficulty. The deepest problem lies in a different point that seems not to have been perceived earlier than in the wake of German Idealism:[3]

> I k n o w t h a t I a m *x*, means
> I k n o w t h a t something I take to be me i s *x*, and that in turn implies
> I k n o w t h a t something I take to be something I take to be me i s *x* etc.

It is easy to see how we run into an infinite regress here: one act of self-consciousness would presuppose an infinite number of prior acts of self-consciousness in order to fill the pronouns "I" and "me" with con-

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[2] Schmitz's main work bears the provocative title *System der Philosophy* (10 vols., Bonn 1964–1980); shorter treatments of his main doctrines are Schmitz 1990 and 2004 (the latter book contains important modifications). Besides, he has written numerous works dealing with the history of philosophy. Further bibliographical information is available on the internet: http://www.gnp-online.de/publikationen/bibliografie.html. Schmitz has also published a very short summary of his main conceptions in English (2004). For a useful, but in certain respects problematic introduction see Soentgen 1998. Neophenomenological methods are currently being applied not only in philosophy proper, but also in a variety of interdisciplinary and intercultural studies.

[3] Schmitz's first clear formulation of this paradox is to be found in Schmitz (1964: 249–251), where he also quotes a much earlier, but imperfect version by J. F. Herbart.

tent, and this is impossible. It is also no solution to replace the second "I" by the name of the knower (in my case: "I know that Sven Sellmer is *x*"), because either (a) I know that I am S.S.: then I run into the same trouble as before, or (b) I fail to know that I am S.S.: then it is no case of s e l f-consciousness. So, another way of stating the same point would be to contend that the proper use of first-person pronouns (and words of the same type) implies a special kind of knowledge that makes them irreducible, irreplaceable by circumlocutions. In the last form this problem has been a hotly debated topic among analytic philosophers for well over three decades now, but — in spite of many attempts to argue against a privileged first-person perspective — as far as I am aware of, to date no one has been able to prove that first-person pronouns (and other "indexicals") are dispensable.

This fact seems to strengthen Schmitz's argument that the above mentioned *regressus* is indeed inescapable if we confine ourselves to the level of the adult human person. But there are other levels and other types of self-consciousness. There i s a way to know that something is a fact about myself without first having to identify myself with something. This is the case when we feel pain, are happy, sad, excited and the like: In all situations of that kind we "know" all too well that it is u s who feel pain and the like, but we cannot express it. When we are utterly overwhelmed by joy or the like, we may indeed feel ourselves very intensely in some sense, but at the same time we are literally "speechless": not because of some mechanical obstruction of our speech organs, but because we are quite simply overwhelmed and do not have any distance to what we are experiencing, hence we are unable to perform any self-ascription. And though we cannot ask them, it seems very probable that small children and animals also share this type of self-consciousness. Of course, one must keep these two ways to be self-conscious apart: in the second case we certainly have to do with a very different type of "knowledge". Schmitz uses the rather clumsy terms "self-consciousness with self-ascription" (*Selbstbewusstsein mit Selbstzuschreibung* = SC_{+SA}) and "self-consciousness without self-ascription" (*Selbstbewusstsein ohne Selbstzuschreibung* = SC_{-SA}).

Assuming that there are indeed two levels of self-consciousness, it seems to be an attractive idea to use the basic level (SC_{-SA}) in order to remove the paradox of self-consciousness that appears on the higher level. But this is easier said than done. It will not do to just replace SC_{+SA} by SC_{-SA}, because normally we a r e able to perform acts of self-ascription. So, the big question is how to bring the two levels together. Philosophically, this is no an easy task, because they feature different structures and

are not readily combinable. Still, our everyday experience tells us that we live most of our life somewhere in between these extreme possibilities, on both levels at the same time, as it were. This structural trait of our personality is inherent in such everyday concepts like "self-distance", "self-betrayal" and so on, which we understand quite well but have severe problems to define. To adequately describe this specific ambivalence of the human person Schmitz employs a new logical tool, which he calls "infinite undecidedness".[4] Its main aim is to describe in a logically consistent way inherently ambivalent states. According to Schmitz, the human person is inherently ambivalent in such a way that, in order to avoid a contradiction, the question whether the self-consciousness of person takes place with or without self-ascription must be described as i n f i n i t i v e l y undecided, i.e. it is not only undecided whether it takes place with or without self-ascription,[5] but also whether it is undecided, whether it takes place with or without self-ascription, whether it is undecided, whether it is undecided, whether it takes place with or without self-ascription etc. *ad inf.*

This is, it has to be admitted, a somehow confusing construction to describe a confusing phenomenon. But rather than dwelling on these details, let us have a closer look at the (to my mind) most important feature of Schmitz's theory: that SC_{-SA} is understood as basic and indispensable for SC_{+SA}. It is here — on the level of pure SC_{-SA} — where he finds not only the foundations of subjectivity, but subjectivity itself. Subjectivity in this sense cannot be exhaustively defined, but it can be pointed at: It is that "mineness", that quality of being emotionally, affectively engaged that is so difficult to describe, but so well known to all of us.

One can get a quite good feel for what is meant with the help of a simple thought experiment. Imagine you are very sad and say "I am sad". Then replace "I" by your name; in my case: "Sven Sellmer is sad". As long as I am fully aware that I am S. S. that does not change anything. But if I now repeat this sentence several times and simultaneously try to exclude the information that I am S. S. and look at it as at a piece of information about some unknown person, then I can observe that the sentence changes its character: A certain feeling-tone is vanishing while I am detaching myself. The interesting point is that I cannot restore it by simply adding "S. S. is really sad, he is deeply affected by sadness" or the like. Similarly, replacing the name S. S. by a thorough and comprehensive de-

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[4] For a full account of the "logic of iterated undecidedness" cf. SCHMITZ 1999: 89–97.

[5] Because it is not really u n c l e a r whether one of the alternatives applies, rather both very clearly seem to be true at the same time.

scription of myself would also not do the job — as long as I pretend not to know that the person described is m e.[6]

I hope by now it has become clear what Schmitz has in mind when he is talking about subjectivity on the level of SC_{-SA}, though it is a phenomenon virtually impossible to define in plain terms. The very designation "subjectivity" is rather problematic in this context because when there is nothing but SC_{-SA} there is no person, no subject, so paradoxically we could speak of a "subjectivity without a subject" here. Subjects (in the sense of adult human persons) are indeed results of a special process on the basis of this "subjectless subjectivity".

This development in the life of a human being is called "emancipation of the person" (*personale Emanzipation*) by Schmitz.[7] As the account of this process is an important part of his theory of subjectivity and crucial for my own employment of it, I will give at least a short account of it. At the beginning we find ourselves on the level of a new-born baby: pure SC_{-SA}, no reflection. The origin of SC_{+SA}, according to Schmitz, is closely connected to the development of language. Language — in whatever form — gives evolving persons the opportunity to single out material things and states of affairs whereas babies and most animals perceive and think in a purely holistic manner. Simultaneously, the partial fragmentation of the world means a chance for the young human being to draw a line between everything that is of importance to him (the home world [*Eigenwelt*]) on the one hand, and the rest (the foreign world [*Fremdwelt*]) on the other. For the theory of subjectivity this splitting up of the world has an important consequence: subjectivity can now be described as the characteristic trait of the home world. In the foreign world, where subjectivity is lacking, we can speak of objectivity or neutrality (I prefer the second term). Consider for example the fate of a person X. If I happen to love or hate this person, if — in other words — he belongs to my home world, his fate is a matter of intense personal concern for me. If, on the other hand, X is completely unknown and unconnected to me, any information about him will be a mere objective fact for me and will not arouse any particular interest. These considerations are not only of psychological importance for Schmitz, they lead him to the provocative ontological stance that subjective states of affairs are fundamental (even prior to subjects themselves) and that their objective/neutral counterparts are but an impoverished version of them — contrary to the

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[6] This little experiment, besides illustrating the nuance of subjectivity, suggests very strongly that first person pronouns and similar words are irreplaceable by circumlocutions, though it certainly does not amount to a scientific proof.

[7] Cf. SCHMITZ 1990: 153–155.

standard account according to which objective/neutral facts are the basic items, that are only secondarily "loaded" with subjectivity by the subjects.

2. APPLICATIONS

2.1. M e t h o d o l o g y

The conception of subjectivity just presented first of all forms part of Schmitz's philosophical anthropology. But he also applies it in several historical studies where he tracks the problem he calls "alienated subjectivity": a problem with many faces whose core is a clear (and often painful) awareness of the elusiveness of the self, of the impossibility to define myself in objective terms. The most important philosophers he interprets under this angle are Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger.[8] Without going into details, it can safely be said that in all of these cases this approach is methodologically justified because Schmitz's theory itself presupposes the paradox of self-consciousness, which in turn may be regarded as an abstract formulation of the problem of alienated subjectivity.

In contrast, the application of the presented conception to pre-modern and non-European philosophical texts raises questions. Would that not be a blatant anachronism and, in the latter case, an illegitimate superimposing of specifically Western concepts onto non-European traditions? It has to be admitted that these are indeed real dangers, which require thorough methodological considerations. I was confronted with these problems when preparing a comparative study about the approaches to subjectivity in six pre-modern philosophical traditions (three of them being, in addition, non-European): Stoicism, Epicureanism, Pyrrhonian Scepticism, the early Upanishads, Sāṃkhya, and early Buddhism (Sellmer 2005). But I hope to have eschewed the trap of anachronism by not applying Schmitz's theory as a whole but only some of its elements that are of independent value and not specifically modern. The neophenomenological elements employed are: (a) the fundamental position of a sub-personal subjectivity I prefer to call "proto-subjectivity", because subjectivity in the full sense appears only when it is set in contrast to neutrality; (b) the distinction between home world and foreign world. As to the second problem of "Westernization", it has to be underscored that both of the concepts used are

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[8] Cf. SCHMITZ 1992 and 1995.

p h e n o m e n o l o g i c a l ones, and that is, in my conviction, a great advantage in comparative studies, especially in those of the cross-cultural kind. This is because a phenomenological approach often allows one to access a common level beneath differing terminological frameworks, even if historically they have nothing in common at all. But it must be added that phenomenological concepts will be less well applicable to distinctly "scholastic" traditions, operating with ready-made concepts in a more or less formalistic way, which I therefore excluded from my study. Furthermore, I was not searching for an outspoken theory of subjectivity, but for any doctrines somehow related to the problematics of subjectivity, widely understood.

The traditions I chose were, as already mentioned, on the Indian side, early Buddhism, the early Upanishads and Sāṃkhya, on the Greek side, Stoicism, Scepticism and Epicureanism. My starting point was the idea that all of these philosophies had a practical aim in common (though they should not be reduced to that): to end or, at least, to minimize, suffering. Their common problem can, in Schmitzean terminology, be expressed in the following way: the average man's home world is not under his control, so he is vulnerable to any negative changes that may occur there. I therefore call it the "problem of vulnerability". Their strategies to solve it are very different, but the general approach is exactly the same: It is all about changing the home world — both in theory and in practice — by defining and assigning subjectivity and neutrality in such a way as to become as invulnerable as possible.

In order to illustrate how strategies of this kind work — and also to show the usefulness of the neophenomenological notion of subjectivity — I will pick out two of the mentioned philosophical traditions and very briefly present some of my results: Stoicism and early Buddhism seem to be a good choice because they represent two typical approaches.[9]

2.2. S t o i c i s m

In the Stoic system[10] there are three elements that directly touch upon the problematics of subjectivity: the doctrine of goods, the psychology of action, and the process of appropriation *(oikeiōsis)*.

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[9] For more thorough accounts of my investigations (including copious quotations from the primary sources and discussions of the scholarly literature) see SELLMER 2005: 37–92; 265–324. Here I must confine myself to a very short presentation.

[10] When talking of "the Stoic system", I am referring to a kind of standard Hellenistic doctrine that contains both Zenonian and Chrysippean elements, without, as a rule, attempting to make a distinction between the contributions of both philosophers.

2.2.1. Doctrine of Goods

The Stoic doctrine of goods features a sharp division between things that matter and things that do not matter (*adiaphora* 'indifferent things'): a dichotomy that comes quite close to the division in home world and foreign world. What is specific about this doctrine is its radical stance: the only thing that matters is virtue, understood as a stable and perfectly rational disposition of the soul (and the things directly appertaining to virtue), everything else is of no importance. But it must be added at this point that only few Stoics stuck to this theory in an unqualified form, most notably Aristo of Chios (3rd BC) who was a quite influential figure in his time but later fell into oblivion, mainly due to Chrysippus' strong critique of his position. Chrysippus was the main architect of what was to become the standard doctrine. According to this less radical position, the class of indifferent things contains things that do not matter at all (e.g., the fact that the number of my hairs is even [or odd]) and others that do not really matter but of whom, under normal circumstances, some are preferable (*proēgmenos*) to others; e.g., healthiness as opposed to illness (illness would be "dispreferable" [*apoproēgmenos*], to imitate the clumsy Stoic terminology). It looks like an inconsequence that some things are considered to be indifferent and yet, in a certain sense, preferable or dispreferable. Indeed, one may argue that the Stoics were forced to make this modification: If they wanted to make their philosophy practical, they had to introduce some distinctions that would work on the everyday level. But there is also a deeper justification that can be given on the basis of Stoic psychology.

2.2.2. Psychology of Action

Stoicism is a practical philosophy and, consequently, Stoic psychology is, first of all, a psychology of action. Its standard account of action consists of three steps: *phantasia* → *sunkatathesis* → *hormē* (→ physical action).
  First there is an impression (*phantasia*) that in itself is not capable of evoking any (re)action. The impulse (*hormē*) to act comes only as a third step and is always preceded by an act of assent (*sunkatathesis*). If — and only if — the assent is given, then an impulse to act ensues that counts as an action in itself. The physical action that may, or may not, follow (in case of some hindering outside force) is of minor importance from an ethical point of view.
  The different kinds of impulses can be understood as different ways of becoming engaged, therefore it seems justified to speak of a "hormet-

ic" conception of subjectivity in Stoicism. As can easily be seen, the most important member of the Stoic chain of action is the *sunkatathesis*, the assent, that is given by the *hēgemonikon* (scil. *meros*) the "leading [part]" of the soul.[11] So subjectivity is totally dependent on a sovereign faculty of the soul. This, in turn, enables the sage to be perfectly happy because his control mechanism functions perfectly, and no outward influence is capable of changing the ideal condition of his soul (which is virtue, as the Stoics understand it). The structure of Stoic virtue and happiness is therefore, in a way, self-referential. But to give a full account it is important to add that the Stoics did not conceive of control as of a value in itself. Rather, perfect control is inextricably linked to perfect rationality, to acting and feeling in accord with the Universal Logos (or Reason).

All this amounts to a picture according to which the Stoic sage is not merely an absolutely cool observer of the surrounding world, as he is sometimes portrayed; he is also a person who is capable of quite energetic actions (resulting naturally from his impulses). But the crucial point about acting for a Stoic is to keep in mind that the main impulse must always be directed at the only thing that r e a l l y matters: acting virtuously, i.e. with the right intentions. That, in order to act virtuously, I have to act in some concrete way, is a fact of secondary importance. Therefore, the outcome of my actions should not bother me, as long as I do my very best: These practical aims are only p r e - f e r r e d things. The impulses directed at the results of my actions must always be impulses with a certain mental reservation (*meth' hupexaireseōs*) so that disappointments are excluded from the very outset. The same holds true for the whole emotional life of the sage (if the term "emotional" is fitting at all). The main danger for happiness consists exactly in having impulses directed at unworthy objects and hence liable to frustration. These irrational and unruly impulses are called "passions" (*pathē*) in Stoic terminology. Chrysippus compares the passionate man to a runner who is unable to stop at will; the sage, in contrast, always walks (Long and Sedley 1987: 65): he controls his steps at any time and never loses his composure (this is what *apatheia* and *ataraxia* amount to).

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[11] It should be stressed that the *hēgemonikon* is not really a s e p a r a t e part of the soul as the older Stoics did not acknowledge a partition of the soul. Its crucial position for the question of subjectivity is underscored by the fact that only adult human persons (i.e., human beings in the full sense) possess the ability to judge their impressions.

2.2.3. Appropriation

The sketched ideal state is reached only as the end result of a process of "appropriation" (*oikeiōsis*). As far as this conception can be reconstructed from the scarce sources, one can distinguish two types: a horizontal and a vertical one. The horizontal appropriation consists in learning to perceive oneself as part of a world-wide community of mankind, and accordingly to see the other human beings as belonging to oneself (*oikeios*). The aim of the second, vertical type of appropriation is to treat the *hēgemonikon* as the very core of one's own person, and ultimately to identify oneself with it. These two movements may seem to be contradictory, but if one keeps in mind that the *hēgemonika* of all adult human beings ideally work in accordance with the one Divine Logos,[12] this problem vanishes.

2.3. E a r l y   B u d d h i s m

When searching early Buddhist texts[13] for traces of the problematics of subjectivity one is confronted with a curious problem: there is no lack of such traces, rather they are virtually omnipresent, so that it is quite difficult to arrange the material in a satisfactory manner. The textual history of the Pali canon makes it a priori clear that we should not expect a single doctrine, laid out in a systematic way. So a presentation of the evidence in separate points seems to be in order. Let us start with the complementary concept to subjectivity: neutrality.

2.3.1. Neutrality

The ideal liberated state has numerous facets in the Buddhist texts, hence it would be rather pointless to try to define *nirvāna*. But I think it is an uncontroversial thesis that neutrality is an important part of many conceptions of liberation found in the Pali canon.[14] The word that comes closest to denote especially this aspect is probably *upekkhā* (Skt. *upekshā*;

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[12] Also, one should remember that for the materialist Stoics the *hēgemonikon* and the Divine Logos are literally made o f   t h e   s a m e   s t u f f.

[13] With "early Buddhist texts" I mean older parts of the Pali canon, especially the *Nikāyas*. Sanskrit equivalents of Pali words are given in brackets.

[14] This holds true even for Mahāyānic traditions, but here the situation is more complicated due to the predominance of the *bodhisattva* ideal.

lit. 'disregard'), mostly translated as equanimity. In Theravāda Buddhism it is regarded as one of the seven "limbs of awakening" (*bojjhanga*, Skt. *bodhyanga*), hence merely as a precondition for liberation, but in some older passages of the canon it appears as equivalent to liberation itself.[15]

Buddhism has practical aims, so it is no wonder that the descriptions of practical ways to neutrality are more revealing than single concepts and definitions. Three main methods are discernible:

(1) The first way leads through *sati* (Skt. *smṛti* 'mindfulness'): many exercises of mindfulness consist in assuming a neutral, detached perspective towards a large number of normally very subjective things (e.g. the own body). Again, *sati* for today's Theravādins is only a precondition for liberation, but in the old list of the four *jhāna-s* (Skt. *dhyāna* 'stages of meditative absorption'), e.g., it itself assumes the position of highest perfection.[16]

(2) Another relevant exercise is called the four *brahmavihāra-s* ('divine states'): The adept is asked to realize in turn the states of friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity (*mettā* [Skt. *maitrī*], *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekkhā*) and to spread them in all directions.[17] This can be interpreted as achieving neutrality by a kind of inflation of subjectivity: Friendliness (etc.) that is spread over the whole world automatically is diluted to something like positive neutrality.[18]

The third method uses simple forms of argumentation and a well known formula that could almost be called the Buddhist neutralization formula: "This is not mine, this is not I, this is not my Self" (*n' etam mama, n' eso' ham asmi, na m' eso attā*). In most cases it is the *khandha-s* (Skt. *skandha*), the components of the empirical person, that appear in these contexts. In the first step they are said not to fulfil certain criteria (e.g., permanence, in the paradigmatic version *Samyuttanikāya* III: 66–68), and, as a consequence, they are neutralized by means of the said formula in the second step.

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[15] Cf. MAITHRIMURTHI 1999 (ch. 5, especially p. 149f.); see also the following footnote.

[16] The fourth and the highest stage in this list is characterised as *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* highest purity of equanimity and mindfulness f (*Dīghanikāya* III: 222, and other passages; for a defence of the chosen translation cf. VETTER 1988, p. XXVI, n. 9).

[17] Cf. MAITHRIMURTHI 1999 (ch. 5).

[18] This strategy is rather untypical for a Buddhist environment, it has a distinctly Upanishadic flavour (one can compare the usage of monistic doctrines in the *Chandogya-Upanishad*; see SELLMER 2005: 184–197).

2.3.2. Subjectivity

Turning now to subjectivity itself, we find that the material is not as rich and manifold as in the case of neutrality. There is no one word for subjectivity, but concepts like thirst (*tanhā* [Skt. *trshnā*]), greed (*lobha*, *rāga*, *abhijjhā* [Skt. *abhidhyāna*]) and intention (*cetanā*) sometimes acquire a general meaning (as a kind of *pars pro toto*) that comes quite close. On the other hand, they are often used in an unphenomenological, rather metaphysical way. Such usages are of little use for my approach. In any case, it is clear that these concepts are ultimately of negative value, though they sometimes appear in positive contexts, insofar as they denote a longing for liberation and the like.[19]

A highly controversial and much discussed issue is the status of the notion of the "Self" (*attan*, Skt. *ātman*) in the Pali canon. Many times this word denotes — just like in the Upanishadic tradition — the innermost core of a human being, the centre of subjectivity. But it is doubtful if the authors of the relevant passages themselves would have subscribed to such a conception.[20] Rather we seem to have to do with a rhetorical usage of this brahmanical term for purely polemical purposes.

A very interesting, though quite isolated, passage is the *Khemaka-sutta*[21]: Here the old and revered monk Khemaka asserts that in spite of all his efforts he still is no arhat. Though he has stopped to identify himself with the *skandha-s* in the way "I am that" (*ayam aham asmi*), there remains some "I am" (*asmi*), which he likens to the scent of a lotus flower that is not located in any one part of the flower, but in the flower as a whole. This free-floating subjectivity can be interpreted as proto-subjectivity. But, as one would expect, in the Pali canon it is not treated as a fruitful object of philosophical research but as a hindrance that is to be removed by more intensive meditation exercises.

3. CONCLUSION: SHAPING SUBJECTIVITY

My aim in the second part of this paper has been to show that for comparative studies the neophenomenological theory of subjectivity can be

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[19] This is true, among others, for the word *piya*, which can be interestingly compared to the Sanskrit equivalent *priya* in the Upanishads (see SELLMER 2005: 213–222; 316–320).

[20] PÉREZ-REMÓN (1980) thoroughly records the abundant usage of the term *attan* in the Pali canon, but his conclusions regarding the intentions of its authors are not convincing.

[21] *Samyuttanikāya* III: 126–130; for a fuller account of my interpretation see SELLMER 2005: 295–297.

useful in two respects. Firstly, it offers a terminological framework to describe the individual systems under investigation. Secondly, and more importantly, the same framework may then serve as a basis for a comparison of the described philosophies.

Both traditions presented are similar in their general approach: they contain a normative picture of subjectivity that is meant to motivate and enable the practitioner to alter the shape of his home and foreign world accordingly. But the two ideals and the proposed strategies to attain them are quite different.

The Stoics draw a sharp division line between home and foreign world. The home world, containing all that really matters, consists of virtue alone. Virtue is the ability to control and to release impulses (i.e. hormetic s u b j e c t i v i t y) via the *hēgemonikon,* according to the Divine Logos, i.e., the ability to always primarily direct them at acting virtuously, and only secondarily and with due reservation at the goals of these actions. In this way the home world is reduced to a fortress-like core that is entirely under my control (one might almost say: that i s my control), in which all subjectivity is concentrated, so to speak. Subjectivity is viewed as a kind of force manifesting itself positively in strong decisions and energetic actions, negatively in all kinds of soul movements that transgress the borders of Reason.

In contrast, the Buddhists aim at a state of neutrality, they try to neutralize subjectivity wherever it shows itself. Subjectivity, therefore, comes into view as a practical, rather than as a philosophical, problem. Nevertheless, the Buddhist authors' perspicacity in discovering subjectivity under the most diverse guises and their acumen in inventing various ways to deal with it are of the highest philosophical and psychological interest.

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