

MIND AND ONTOLOGY. INGARDEN'S  
PHENOMENOLOGY AND MAHAYANA PHILOSOPHY  
AS OPPOSED WAYS OF APPROACH TO REALITY

The framework of this article is comparative philosophy. Philosophical problems are considered in Western and Eastern perspectives. An attempt is made to extend the way of philosophizing, not confining just to the Western style of thinking. Roman Ingarden in his writings occasionally mentioned such opportunity. Comparative method enables us to compare philosophical questions and arguments so far considered separately. What seems important is to go beyond historical analysis; comparative results should create theses valid for contemporary philosophical reflection as well as for the future. The ideas of Indian philosophy, often so different from European ones – understood and accepted or, after critical analysis, refuted – may be a valuable inspiration for our philosophy. The program of phenomenology, on the other side, is open to discussion even such distant philosophical standpoints.

At first glance, Ingarden's phenomenology and Buddhist philosophy appear to be, in spite of some analogies, quite different ways of philosophizing. But it is more profitable to compare two divergent views of reality and consider their underlying presumptions than to remain only within the scope of analogous statements and points of view. This, however, does not seem to be an easy task as it is much easier to recognize similarities than to understand differences between one's own way of thinking and those of others. It is natural, since the ability to expound such differences presupposes a wider world-view than the one provided by one's own cultural and philosophical community. The pronouncement of similarities does not require venturing beyond the familiar territory. What is really at issue, is that such comparative analysis may yield prospective results. Stanisław Schayer, the Polish indologist, argued that a study of Indian philosophical ideas may appear for us as a kind of Socratic *technē maieutike*. It may involve deepened revision of traditional formulas and solutions, force us to go beyond one-sided attitudes and confront us with new, as yet unrealized, philosophical perspectives and spiritual possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

In this article, the school of Buddhist logicians called Vijnanavada, of around 400 A.D. to 1050 A.D., constitutes the ground for comparative analysis. The chief exponents of this school were Dignaga, Dharmakirti and Dharmottara. Some Buddhist questions will be presented also from the point of view of the Madhyamaka school, of around 100 A.D. to 800 A.D. Its outstanding masters were Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti.

#### SOME FEATURES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY – PRESUMPTIONS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The fundamental questions in almost every philosophical system, Western as well as Eastern, center on the nature of reality. Their problems arise out of an attempt to describe 'what there is'. There are some differentiating characteristics of Eastern and Western systems of philosophy, which can be taken as presumptions for comparative analysis of the Western system, that is Ingarden's phenomenology and Eastern philosophy: Buddhist logical school and Madhyamaka school. Their precise expression and range in the case of Ingarden's philosophy and phenomenology in general is the question in discussion.

1. European ontology is essentially an ontology of being, or Being, whereas the Buddhist ontology is a thoroughgoing process ontology. In Buddhism, reality as being or substance is replaced by reality as Universal Flux; active *dharma*s (constitutive elements of reality) incessantly, moment by moment, come into existence and disappear. Instead of stable things, those with the eyes of wisdom can observe nothing but a running stream of creative events. Such differences between the two ontologies result, as we will see, in different solutions to some important philosophical problems.

Ingarden's ontology is an *a priori* one, independent of outward and inward perception, and based exclusively on eidetic insight. The results of such insight are independent of any statement relating to facts. According to Ingarden, ontology paves the way to metaphysical resolutions. It is believed, or at least assumed, that settlements resulting from ontological and metaphysical research accurately refer to things and events in the world, that they are reliable.<sup>2</sup>

Buddhist ontology and metaphysics, on the contrary, may be termed as an *experiential* one. Terms introduced and questions set forth are always considered in close connection with evidence, with observed facts and events, claims are to be identified in usual, everyday experience or, what is more important, in meditative experience. There are certain ontological