

ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL MEANING OF THE IDEA OF REINCARNATION

SOBRE EL SIGNIFICADO FILOSÓFICO DE LA IDEA DE REENCARNACIÓN

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Abstract: The main goal of this work is to argue that reincarnation can no longer be an answer to existential anguish, as described by philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre, because rebirth was the answer for people who were immerse in a religious or even a metaphysical outlook of life, while modern human condition emerges precisely when those forms of certainty begin to fade away. Nevertheless, we will show that the idea of reincarnation can still be a valuable tool for understanding certain features of western philosophy, such as the thermodynamic model of thought.

Keywords: reincarnation, existential condition, thermodynamic model of thought

Resumen: El principal objetivo de este trabajo es argumentar que la reencarnación no puede ya ser la respuesta a la angustia existencial, tal como ésta es descrita por filósofos como Heidegger y Sartre, porque el renacer fue una respuesta para gente que estaba inmersa en una perspectiva religiosa o metafísica de la vida, mientras que la moderna condición humana emerge precisamente cuando estas formas de certeza comienzan a desvanecerse. No obstante, se mostrará que la idea de

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reencarnación aún puede ser una valiosa herramienta para entender ciertos rasgos del pensamiento occidental, tales como el modelo termodinámico de pensamiento.

Palabras clave: reencarnación, condición existencial, modelo termodinámico de pensamiento

INTRODUCTION

In popular culture, reincarnation is conceived as some kind of journey or *grand tour* which an entity, the soul, takes in order to be purified and advance to higher degrees of consciousness. For ancient people it was sufficient proof of reincarnation to observe the cycles of death and rebirth in nature, for example, spring to winter, winter to spring. The Sanskrit word to refer to what is commonly understood by reincarnation is *samsara*. One must notice that the meaning of *samsara* does not completely coincides with that of *reincarnation*, since the former points out to a state of wandering through cycles of life and death, as illustrated, for example, in the Buddhist *wheel of life*, (Takakusu 1949, p. 30). whereas the latter underlines the act of reentering a new body after death. In this paper, both meanings will come into play. We believe that the original meaning of *samsara* is more favorable to a modern philosophical interpretation, while *reincarnation* sounds more like a Christian reading of the same subject because of the eschatological overtones attached to this term. With respect to the word *rebirth* we will just say that falls somewhere in the middle of the previously explained meanings. It doesn't have the strong metaphysical accent of *reincarnation* and it does point to the sense of movement prevalent in *samsara*. Accordingly, in this paper *reincarnation* will appear more times than the other two –*rebirth* and *samsara*– because our analysis has its point of departure in the metaphysical aspects implied in the first term (*reincarnation*). Occasionally, we will insert the word *rebirth*, more than anything as a stylistic measure. The other term –*samsara*– will be used sparsely, due to its physical –as opposed to metaphysical– accents. In fact, the objective of this work can be construed as the philosophical journey from *reincarnation* to *samsara*. We will leave for a future research the study of the way back from one to the other.

Perhaps the idea of *reincarnation* is integral to ancient agrarian societies. For people of those times it was apparent that when the fruit dies it releases its seeds and soon enough a new tree is born. Human life was more or less in harmony with the perennial cosmic cycles; people trusted Mother Nature and coupled their own existence with the changing

seasons. This was the environment from which the idea of reincarnation emerged. The same cannot be said of the modern individual that lives in the information society. Religious or metaphysical discourses no longer have the power to appease the existential questions that haunt the human condition. We are going to illustrate this rupture by analyzing some topics of existentialist philosophy.

I. THE EXISTENTIAL CONDITION.

Is not our objective in this section to present existentialist philosophy as the ultimate truth about life, but rather to say that we accept some of its views on the human condition. We accept them as a sort of register of an epoch's spiritual climate, a form of consciousness peculiar to modern man, the content of which can be summarize in three concepts: absurdity, anguish and liberty.

Nietzsche's discourse on the death of God (Nietzsche 2008, p.120) is the point of departure to understand the modern existential condition. The religious and the metaphysical paradigms ceased to provide an answer to the question of the meaning of life, a question that it was even somehow silenced by the weight of the answer given to it in pre-modern times. Indeed, the inquiry about the meaning of life turned more pressing as the religious/metaphysical answers became outdated.

After the death of God as a historical event it became possible for Heidegger to write about *existence (Dasein)* in terms like this: "Just in the most indifferent and harmless everydayness the being of Da-sein can burst forth as the naked 'that it is and has to be.' The pure 'that it is' shows itself, the whence and whither remain obscure." (Heidegger 1996, p.127). In order to understand the concept of existence is a good starting point to look at the clues contained in the word itself, compounded by the latin prefix *e/ex*, meaning a movement from the inside to the outside, like an outburst; and *sistere*, to sustain, to persevere standing outside. Right from the beginning these notions transmit a sense of movement and tension. Imagine Being as a flat surface, similar to a resting pond or a still lake. Existence would be like a little wave coming up from the surface of the water, or a bump, a protuberance standing out from the surface of Being. Even the posture of human beings, vertical animals amongst a majority of horizontal ones, evokes the existential condition of the species.

The meaning of death changes significantly from an outlook based on reincarnation to the one of existentialism. To believe in reincarnation implies not to consider death as a definitive event. It is a passage to another life. There is no such conviction in Heidegger. When the German thinker is presenting his discourse on death, there is no doubt about how distant

his outlook is from any religious or metaphysical paradigm: “We cannot even ask with any methodological assurance about what ‘is after death’ until death is understood in its full ontological essence. Whether such a question presents a possible theoretical question at all is not to be decided here. The this-worldly, ontological interpretation of death comes before any ontic, other-worldly speculation.” (230). Heidegger also writes about those forms of conduct intended to elude the confrontation with oneself as a *Dasein*. It never mentions religious beliefs as a case of evasiveness, but it can be derived from his thesis that an idea like reincarnation interferes with the type of consciousness he is describing.

In the case of Sartre, we find a similar discourse about the existential condition: “I emerge alone and in anguish confronting the unique and original project which constitutes my being...” (Sartre 1956, p. 77). Similar, but perhaps more direct or radical in his approach: “If we must die, then our life has no meaning because its problems receive no solution and because the very meaning of the problems remains undetermined.”(690). There is not a meaning to life. There are only a fragmented group of quotidian meanings (to take care of the family, professional development, maintain health, be happy, etc.). But if someone asks what is the meaning of it all, that question only signals that the individual asking it is going through a crisis, is going to make a halt in his routine, and possibly is going to rearrange his bundle of quotidian meanings. Therefore, it can safely be said that a religious or a metaphysical answer to the existential condition, such as the one provided by the idea of reincarnation, is utterly unsatisfactory, given the human condition as described by the French thinker.

The ineffectiveness of any religious or metaphysical foundation of existence in our age does not arise from a belligerent atheistic refusal to accept those kinds of discourses. The historical conditions that used to hold existence in place have become outdated. One cannot imagine a Heidegger or a Sartre resting on the thought of rebirth. Not because some sort of atheism or materialism. In the case of Heidegger, it is even possible to argue that the thinker of the Schwarzwald had a very fine religious sensibility. Remember his famous dictum “Only a God can save us.” (Heidegger 1976, p. 193). And, according to Sartre, “Existentialism is not so much an atheism in the sense that it would exhaust itself attempting to demonstrate the nonexistence of God; rather, it affirms that even if God were to exist, it would make no difference—that is our point of view.” (Sartre 2007, p. 53). We can see that Sartre’s position is not of an aggressive antagonism towards religion, but is rather an effort to describe the emergence of existence in a world devoid of supernatural references.

In modern human beings the awareness of death is quite peculiar.

If someone is dying it is of little help to tell that person that is going to reincarnate and that he or she will continue to live on. Death has the power to overwhelm human consciousness and to present itself as the absolute end. "Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein." (Heidegger 1996, p. 232). One may have the vague suspicion that 'this cannot be the end', based on the feeling that we don't know if this is everything that there is and also a certain awareness of the might and greatness of life; nonetheless, similar things can be said about death, about the force with which extracts a person from his/her world. The radical and swift transformation from living human being to corpse is in itself something that challenges human comprehension. In any case, there is no way to integrate death into a higher purpose: "...this perpetual appearance of chance at the heart of my projects can not be apprehended as my possibility, but, on the contrary, as the nihilation of all my possibilities, a nihilation which itself is no longer a part of my possibilities." (Sartre 1956, p. 687). Therefore, in existentialism death is a sort of absurd ending that cannot be harmonized with the projects that give life its energy.

Nevertheless, is only fair to say that, at least in the case of Sartre, the accent is not in the definitive aspect of death, but rather in the possibilities of life: "These remarks, it will be noted, are not derived from the consideration of death but, on the contrary, from the consideration of life..."(691). This can be a point of agreement between rebirth and existentialism since both affirm the will to live to the fullest of our potentials, although through different roads.

A fallout from the decline of religious mentality, the truncated structure of existence, as construed by existentialism, remains linked to the said mentality. By simply pretending to dwell on such unstable cliffs, projected over the abyss, this existential tension may feed the desire for a spiritual resolution. Why not stop anguishing and languishing and instead opt for a leap of faith like the one described by Kierkegaard, one of the inspirers of existentialist philosophy? So there is a sense in which existentialist philosophy appeals to religious or metaphysical discourses otherwise diluted in the proliferation and fragmentation typical of information societies.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE IDEA OF REINCARNATION FROM THREE TEXTS.

In this section we will extract possible philosophical meanings of reincarnation by interpreting three ancient eastern texts. Our intention is to show the value of this idea to expand and stimulate philosophical research.

a. *Kausitaki Upanishad*

“Now, if a man objects to the moon (if one is not satisfied with life there) the moon sets him free. But if a man does not object, then the moon sends him down as rain upon this earth. And according to his deeds and according to his knowledge he is born again here as a worm, or as an insect, or as fish, or as a bird, or as a lion, or as a boar, or as a serpent, or as a tiger, or as a man, or as something else in different places.” (Müller 1879, p. 274). There seems to be an order, a progression, in the cited fragment. The enlisted beings follow one another as in the food chain. It can be said, then, that the author is trying to convey the idea that in every being there is a part of us, as well as inside us dwells every being. And this is the philosophical content of the idea of reincarnation. Understanding reincarnation in a substantial, literal way cannot stand a critical examination. For instance, according to Buddhism there is no soul (atman) that survives death and goes into another body. “Buddhism does not admit the existence of a soul that is real and immortal.” (Takakusu, p. 195). Still, reincarnation is an intrinsic component of Buddhism. This opens up the possibility to carry on with the philosophical interpretation of rebirth.

In respect to the moral justification of reincarnation, that is, to be born again in a ‘lower form of life’ as a consequence of not living in accordance to the established laws, and, conversely, to reach a higher level by complying with the dharma, although this narrative has an undeniable value as it strengthens social institutions, nevertheless, in this paper we are more interested in discussing the metaphysical meaning of rebirth, rather than the moral one.

b. A tale from the *Panćatantra*. (Śarma 2006, pp. 325-330)

There is a fable about a mouse found by a holy man who decided to turn the little creature into a baby girl. When the time came to find a husband for her, the ascetic offer her adoptive daughter to the sun, as he thought this almighty celestial being will be the best husband for the young lady. But when consulted about it, she refused the proposal and requested someone superior. The father asked the sun about a greater being, to which the star replied that the cloud was most powerful since it can overshadow him. However, the cloud was also not accepted by the maiden. The ascetic proceeded to ask the cloud the same question about a higher being, to which it indicated that the wind was superior because it can blow him away. So again, the sage repeated the inquiry, and again the maiden rejected the offer. When consulted, the wind said that the

mountain was stronger. Once again the suitor was denied and once again came the consultation about a more powerful being, to which finally the mountain recommended the mice (because they can burrow a hole in him and he cannot do anything about it). At last, the maiden was pleased, and was turned back into a mouse.

There are many dimensions that can be analyzed in this tale. Here we are specifically concerned with its relation to the idea of samsara. To do this, we must direct our attention to the chain of beings that runs throughout the story. Notice the effort to encompass all creatures, from the biggest to the tiniest, and notice that although the girl shuns each and every one, nonetheless she has to make the tour, visit all of them, come to know them, attest to their weaknesses (that stem from their strengths), until she recognizes herself and finds inside of her what she was looking for in the outside. It is important to notice that the girl needed to travel outwards in order to recognize what is in her inner realm. Keeping this in mind helps avoid falling into a sort of magical voluntarism. Also, the circular structure of the tale is evident: the searcher ends up at her point of departure, only with a renewed understanding or recognition of who she truly is. The circular nature of reality will be of relevance when trying to comprehend the concept of time that is at play in the idea of samsara (see 3 below).

c. *Hyakujō's fox*. (Grimstone 2005, p. 31)

This is one of those mind-opening devices that in Zen Buddhism are called koans. The story goes like this. An old man was always present in the back of the room listening to master Hyakujō lessons. One day, the master asked him who he was, at which question the old man answered that he used to be a head monk, but that in a certain occasion was questioned by a student who asked him if an enlightened person falls under the law of causation. He responded that it does not. For that answer he had been reincarnating as a fox for five hundred years. Afterwards, the monk/fox requested the master for the correct answer. Hyakujō told him that an enlightened person is not independent from causation. After hearing this, the old monk understood and became freed from his life as a fox. We are going to cut here the story since the ending is somehow redundant and, in any case, does not affect our interpretation.

In accordance with Mahayana teachings the koan typically presents a person that undergoes a sudden awakening, although after a long search. It can be said that existence is like a coin with two faces: time and the instant. The idea can also be illustrated using the simile of the point and the line: time can be thought of as an elongated point

(i.e., a line); the instant, as a compacted line (i.e., a point). Time and rebirth: five hundred years like one instant only prolonged. All the lives lived become one. A highly regarded idea in Zen Buddhism, instantaneous enlightenment teaches us that the long line of rebirths can be thought as occurring simultaneously. The fox is the liberated monk seen through the prism of time.

III. TIME AND REINCARNATION

When one searches for the concept of time according to science, it is highly probable that the answer will come from the field of thermodynamics, and it will come under the expression *the arrow of time* (head pointing towards the future). This is the only instance of a concept of time in science that most closely resembles our own experience of a linear procession from the past to the future with the present somehow in the middle of it all. The concept of the arrow of time derives from the second law of thermodynamics, which states that the entropy, understood as the measure of the randomness of the particles that constitute a given system, can only increase, so any moment with less entropy is most likely 'in the past' in respect to a state of greater entropy.

Further, if according to science there was a moment when the universe was compacted and from there it begun to expand (i.e., the big bang), if this is plausible, then one can at least imagine that time was also compacted, every event occurring simultaneously. Time was not a line, but a point. Admittedly, this speculation sounds like taking too far the concept of time. Nevertheless, it can help us build a more philosophical understanding of reincarnation. We are accustomed to think about rebirth in a successive procession from the distant past and following the arrow of time, but the process can also be conceived as a simultaneous event: all our transformations occur in an instant, no lapse of time interposes between each rebirth. All our reincarnations are active in the same present instant. And every entity with which we interact is a reincarnation of ourselves. Time is like a rubber band: it can stretch or it can compact. To refer to time mostly in its elongated state is only a habit, although a deep rooted one.

IV. THE THERMODYNAMIC MODEL OF THOUGHT.

According to the second law of thermodynamics heat always travels from the hotter body to the coldest one, in other words, whenever there is a differential of temperature between two adjacent bodies there is going to be a transference of energy until an equilibrium is reached. Similarly, what we call here the thermodynamic model of thought refers to a

reasoning schema that constructs reality as a process of becoming through three basic moments which can be named in many forms, including this: stability, instability, stability regained. A very simple example: a person is satiated (stability). After a few hours becomes hungry (instability), so then cooks something to eat and gets satiated again (stability regained).

We have called it here the thermodynamic paradigm, but we must keep in mind that this is a retroactive use of the term: the branch of physics came after and it is a derivation of the philosophical idea. For instance, one can find a sort of second law mechanism in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, where the Prussian philosopher explains that there is a problematic gap between the will and the moral law, an unevenness manifested in the form of the effort each person has to endure to make both poles coincide. The distance between the will and the moral law manifests itself as obligation and duty. The identity between the will and the moral law Kant calls it holiness: "...for the will of a maximally perfect being the moral law is a law of holiness, but for the will of every finite rational being it is a law of duty, of moral necessitation, and of the determination of his actions through respect for that law and from reverence for his duty." (2002, p. 106) The thermodynamic logic of the argument is clear: an unevenness between two related elements (the will and the moral law) that unleashes a work (obligation and duty) in order to recuperate the equilibrium. The same paradigm is present in Aquina's *Summa Theologica*: God, humanity, and the return of all the creatures to God. Also, the said paradigm is at work in Hegel (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) and in Marx (primitive communism, history and communism at the end of history). Even in psychology we can see it at work, for example, the process of adaptation through assimilation and accommodation, as described by J. Piaget (1967, pp. 7-8).

If one accepts the postulate that we live in a post-metaphysical age, we can say that the thermodynamic model of thought has had a metaphysical value in philosophy up until the nineteenth century, considering Hegel's philosophical system as the last complete one. Marx also follows the same model that he adapted from the Romantic thinker; however, Hegel was able to complete an encyclopedia encompassing the knowledge available in his time. It is possible to argue that in both thinkers the ending of a historical cycle becomes the beginning of a new one. Nevertheless, we apply the term "metaphysical" to account for the strong sense of finality and completeness present in what we have named here the thermodynamic model of thought. After the nineteenth century, the said paradigm is displaced by the emergence of open ended narratives. The movement away from metaphysical discourses continues to be present in the postmodern epoch. In the words of Lyotard: '...I define postmodern

as incredulity toward metanarratives.’(1984, p. xxiv).

Reincarnation is here understood as the time spent in achieving existence’s entropy (*moksha, nirvana*). But since the process is without a beginning or an ending, its nature cannot be precisely defined using rational concepts. The series of rebirths are but the work that a being must undergo in order to find a lost equilibrium. Granted, this thought is only a feeble glimpse into the mystery of existence. Supposing it existed, why and how the primordial state of satisfaction was lost? Perhaps the answer is that it was never lost since at the “end” of samsara one realizes that we never left nirvana, we arrived to the place we have always inhabited, and we reach the point from which we never departed. Once again we face the paradoxes of time (line) and eternity (point). To say that nirvana is the final resting state of the cycles of rebirths only gives way to more questions. What is this nirvana? And how the ever restless human spirit can be stopped from searching, learning, growing?

V. REINCARNATION AND QUANTUM MECHANICS.

In this section our main focus is in the interpretation of the so called double slit experiment, which was designed to show that energy has a dual nature (wave/particle). Let us take a look into the quandary that arises from the said experiment. An elementary particle such as an electron or a photon is shot through one of two slits. Its arrival to the other side is registered with an *ad hoc* device. But when the pattern left by the electrons is observed it forms an interference pattern, that is, the particle behaves like a wave which means that it must have passed through both slits at the same time making thus possible to interfere with itself. “The only explanation consistent with the observations, consistent with quantum theory, and consistent with an array of other experiments is that each photon individually acts as a wave as it makes its way from its source to its detector. Each photon passes through both slits.” (Ford 2004, p. 196). We must confess that this statement is just a popular way of expressing the puzzling nature of the results of the experiment. Notwithstanding, the paradox of one being simultaneously occupying all the available spaces is at the core of the idea of reincarnation. Granted, this may be stretching the analogy too much and the intuition on which it is based ends up adding all kinds of unsettling questions that we are unable to continue pursuing in this paper. Nevertheless, we believe that it can point to a way of understanding the meaning of the ancient idea of reincarnation.

VI. REINCARNATION AND REPETITION.

Yet another way of understanding the philosophical meaning of reincarnation is through the concept of repetition. Although this concept has been explored by Kierkegaard (in *Repetition*), and also by Deleuze (in *Difference and Repetition*), and even by Nietzsche (the notion of the *eternal recurrence*), here we will try an approach through psychoanalysis.

The repetition of a pattern of conduct by an individual was a phenomenon that caught the attention of Freud, specifically the recurrence of acts that do not bring pleasure to the subject, but rather the contrary. On certain occasion, Freud observed his grandson playing alone, throwing an object tie with a string and then making it appear again by pulling it back. Freud made the inference that the game was a way for the child to deal with the painful event of his mother leaving him alone each time she needed to go out: “The departure of the mother cannot possibly have been pleasant for the child . . . How then does it accord with the pleasure-principle that he repeats this painful experience as a game?” (Freud 2010, p. 13). Freud concluded that the repetition aides the child in achieving a mastery over the traumatic experience: “In the play of children we seem to arrive at the conclusion that the child repeats even the unpleasant experiences because through his own activity he gains a far more thorough mastery of the strong impression than was possible by mere passive experience.”(43). It should be notice that *mastery* points to an affirmation of the will to live and not to succumb to the threatening forces that arise from the traumatic event.

The concept of repetition previously presented can be used to uncover the meaning of reincarnation. Repetition is the process by which the pacification of the original tension of existence is achieved. It is through repetition that existence purges itself of all the accumulated ontological tension. The only way out of samsara is through samsara. Hence the concept of repetition: to exhaust, to burn out the fuel that feeds the wheel of samsara.

In Lacanian terms what we have called an ontological tension is referred to as a lack which according to the French psychoanalyst is constitutive of the subject. (Lacan 2006, p. 524). The fault at the core of our being is the source of all our struggles in life, chasing after ourselves, looking to close the fissure that we are. As a constitutive feature, there is no way to erase the gap in our being, not even via a metaphysical process such as reincarnation. This also means that moksha or nirvana, as long as they represent an overcoming of the constitutive fissure, must be understood not as a final resting state, but as the enigmatic reversal of time.

We have digressed a bit from the path of philosophy into psychoanalysis. A brief clarification is required. Psychoanalysis *stricto sensu* is not philosophy, so, what is the distinctive contribution of the latter that separates it from the other sciences? Philosophy strives for a broader understanding of reality. While psychoanalysis strives to adhere to the empirical data about human conduct, philosophy strives for an integral understanding of the origin and fundamental structure of existence. We can say that the function of philosophy is to push the boundaries of knowledge by raising questions for which we have no definitive answers, thus satisfying a desire in human mind to expand the meaning of concepts beyond the secure confinements of empirical knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The philosophical meaning of reincarnation has been anchored in a metaphysical worldview –a complete narrative that strives to find the ultimate answer to the meaning of life. But since now we live in a post-metaphysical era, characterized by the intense circulation of fragmented discourses, and conditioned by the scientific and technological milieu, the metaphysical paradigm has become not wrong but rather inadequate. Obviously, the idea of rebirth does not just disappear. It lives on as a cultural commodity, or as a religious belief, or – our case– as the object of academic inquiry.

Our aim in this work was not to argue against the idea of reincarnation. Instead of that we strived to translate the ancient belief into philosophical language and to show its value to contemporary philosophical inquiry, beyond a merely historical interest. In order to do so, first we presented the contrast between the existential condition and the worldview to which reincarnation is part of. We insist that our aim was not to refute the said worldview but to show its incompatibility with the modern consciousness of death, represented in this work by existentialist philosophy. Although existentialism as a philosophical movement was active around the middle of the 20th century, we believe that the incompatibility between reincarnation and modern thought still is valid in our time.

Throughout this work we came to accept the thought that there are no existential *problems*, since these –*problems*– belong to the technical sphere and can somehow be solved and put aside until once again they demand our attention. On the other hand, once we approach the nucleus of the human subject by means of philosophical reflection there are no problems proper, only our circling around the great unknown. Transcendence is the core attribute of human beings but, transcendence

towards what or where? This constant restlessness, whither to? We enter the region of the mind where the questions have no definitive answers.

Reincarnation, nonetheless, is a beautiful idea, one that expresses the expansion of existence beyond its confinements, to somehow surpass the limits of time and space, towards a kinship between humanity and the rest of the beings that make up the universe. An answer to the deepest longing of human beings, in the idea of reincarnation life finally asserts its hope and optimism and overcomes the thread of dying alienated from the world, incomplete and unfulfilled. Rather than being an evasion from the anguish of death, reincarnation is an affirmation of the will to live and to consummate our deepest desires. An exalted feeling, a notion, a slight suspicion that I am present in all the beings that I see the same way as they are present in me.

What is the value of the idea of reincarnation for the advancement of philosophical thinking? Can it open up new horizons for philosophy? We believe that the concept of repetition, the thermodynamic model of thought, the concept of time and quantum mechanics, show the philosophical potential of the idea. And these are not the only subjects. There is a host of questions concerning, for instance, methodological problems, such as the hermeneutics involved in the study of ancient texts, the relation between myth and rational thinking and the ethical implications of rebirth, among other topics that are open for philosophical research. There is also the study of the way back from *samsara* (physics/philosophy) to reincarnation (religion), as mentioned in the introduction to this work. It is clear, therefore, the value of the idea of reincarnation to philosophical inquiry.

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