

METAZOË: POETIC ONTOLOGY AND LIVED EXPERIENCE OF CONTINUITY

METAZOË: ONTOLOGIA POÉTICA E EXPERIÊNCIA VIVIDA DE CONTINUIDADE

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"epinicians," and Levinas's concept of moral sensitivity. Such an exercise allows us to hypothesise that the re-evaluation of the biological opposition between life and death has little to do with technological power, but is rather an integral part of the history of human thought itself. In this discussion, the afterlife is considered an aesthetic or lived phenomenon that neither denies nor transcends the biological limits of life, but rather inhabits them attentively through words, memory, or presence. Finally, the article concludes that understanding the afterlife from a phenomenological or poetic perspective reveals that the phenomenon of death is in fact the horizon that silently defines life itself.

Keywords: afterlife. poetic ontology. phenomenology. Rilke. Pindar. lived continuity. existential orientation.

Abstract

Metazoë has been described in the past as a theoretical approach to the concept of human continuity in technology, the environment and culture (Oikonomou, 2025), but this article approaches Metazoë from a completely different perspective. Rather than developing its systemic framework, this research treats transhumanism as more than just an approach to human continuity. The article moves away from technical discussions about digital immortality and explores the phenomenology of continuity through a dialogue with Rilke's Duino Elegies, Pindar's

Resumo

Embora o conceito de Metazoë já tenha sido formulado como um quadro conceitual para a compreensão da continuidade humana através de dimensões tecnológicas, ecológicas e culturais, o presente artigo aborda a Metazoë a partir de uma perspectiva diferente. Em vez de expandir sua arquitetura sistemática, ele explora a Metazoë como uma atitude vivida, poética e fenomenológica em relação à continuidade da existência. Afastando-se de argumentos técnicos sobre a imortalidade digital, o artigo volta-se para as visões da poesia e da filosofia, através de um diálogo com as Elegias de Duino, de Rainer Maria Rilke, os Hinos de Píndaro e a sensibilidade ética levinasiana. Defende-se que a superação do dipolo vida-morte não constitui, em primeiro lugar, uma conquista tecnológica, mas uma introspeção profundamente existencial e poética, inscrita na longa história do pensamento humano. A pós-vida é aqui examinada como uma condição estética e empírica, em que a finitude biológica não é negada nem superada, mas vivida com atenção através da linguagem, da memória e da presença relacional. Por fim, o artigo propõe que a Metazoë, entendida dessa forma, reenquadra a morte não como um fato que se segue à vida, mas como um horizonte que molda silenciosamente a maneira como a vida é vivida.

Palavras-chave: Metazoë. Ontologia Poética. Fenomenologia. Píndaro. Rilke. Continuidade Vivencial. Orientação Existencial.

Introduction

The question of what remains after biological death has traditionally belonged to the realm of metaphysics. In the 21st century, however, this question has shifted to the realm of digital technology and ecology. In recent research, the term "post-human" has been coined to describe this new state of continuity in which human presence remains through digital data, ecological integration, and cultural traces (Oikonomou, 2025). Although previous work has highlighted the structural mechanisms of this continuity – how algorithms preserve behaviours or how matter is reintroduced into the biosphere – there remains a critical gap in understanding the inner experience and philosophical tradition of this transition. This article aims to fill that gap. Rather than reiterating the technical possibilities of digital life after death, we turn to the intuitions of poetry and phenomenology. How did Rilke foresee the transformation of the visible into the invisible? To what extent does Pindar's concept of 'glory' (kleos) anticipate digital permanence? By answering these questions, we establish the concept of afterlife not only in silicon or earth, but also in the human capacity for poetic transcendence. Faced with a rapidly changing world, as described by Toffler's dynamics (Oikonomou et al., 2025), it also becomes necessary, from an ethical point of view, to anchor our technological future in these deep humanistic values.

Death is the most universal and at the same time the most incomprehensible fact of human existence. Since the dawn of civilisation, societies and individuals have sought ways to understand it: through myths and rituals, philosophy and religion, and today through technology and science. The question "What happens after death?" concerns not only the metaphysical, but also the very identity of human beings, as each answer reflects our understanding of life, time and meaning. In this context, we propose the concept of the post-human as a tool to describe the diversity of these answers. The choice of term is deliberate: we use the prefix "post-" instead of "meta-". 'Meta-' suggests transcendence, transition and reflection at a higher level, rather than simply temporal succession. Thus, the post-human does not only mean 'life after death' (afterlife), but also 'reflection on life' (meta-life), a reflective category that allows us to think about continuity, transformation and the cycle of existence. The term is not limited to the religious or philosophical sphere, but functions as an interdisciplinary and hybrid category that combines elements of metaphysical thought, ecological science, poetic creation and the technological requirement of digital data encoding.

At this point, it is important to clarify at what level the term "afterlife" is used

in this text. While in previous works afterlife has been developed as a comprehensive theoretical and ethical framework of continuity, here it functions primarily as a lived orientation rather than a systematic model. Metazoë is not considered a doctrine that explains what happens after death, but rather a contemplative attitude that redefines the way life is experienced before its biological end. In this sense, Metazoë refers to a form of full consciousness: acting, writing, teaching and maintaining relationships with the awareness that one's own actions, words and traces are already part of a form of immortality. The emphasis shifts from ontological architecture to existential sensitivity, from the mechanics of permanence to the experience of meaning as something that transcends the present moment.

The academic debate on death and immortality has a long tradition. From Plato and the myth of Er¹ to Heidegger's phenomenology² and, passing through the writings of Derrida³, philosophy has always been interested in the limits of existence. Today, the technological prospects of digital immortality⁴, ecological thinking about the circular economy of life⁵ and the literary representation of death⁶ show that this debate is more relevant than ever. This article argues that these four approaches are linked by a fundamental principle: the encoding and persistence of the sign. Both the poetic function of language (as a cultural reality) and the encoding of digital data (as algorithmic language) function as carriers of information/energy that will be released (reactivated) later, thus ensuring the narrative survival of identity.

The purpose of this article is to develop the "beyond" as an autonomous concept, to explore its multidimensional aspects and to provide answers to related questions:

1. Metaphysics. How did religious and philosophical traditions perceive life after death?
2. Technology. How do modern sciences attempt to prolong or reproduce human existence in light of the current ethics of artificial intelligence (AI ethics)?
3. Ecology. How do biology and environmental sciences emphasise the conti-

¹Plato, *The Republic*, 614a–621d, translated by G.M.A. Grube, revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 291–98.

²Martin Heidegger, *Être et temps*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 279–311.

³Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, translated by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 25–45.

⁴Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking, 2005), 390.

⁵Emanuele Coccia, *The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture*, translated by L. Miller (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 1–20.

⁶Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duineser Elegien und Sonette an Orpheus*, trans. A. Poulin, Jr. (New York: Vintage International, 1995), 147–51.

nunity of life through the cycles of nature?

4. Poetry. How do literature and art preserve voices and experiences beyond the limits of biological time, thus functioning as a cultural system of information coding?
5. Synthesis. How can the above dimensions constitute life after death as a conceptual and ethical category?

The methodological approach of the article is interdisciplinary and interpretative: it combines classical philosophical texts, contemporary theories, scientific discoveries and literary examples. The aim is not to find a single answer to the mystery of death, but to propose a polyphonic horizon of thought in which life after death can be considered as a category that transcends the boundaries of theology, science or art. The analysis is interpretative, with an emphasis on concepts and their symbolic intersections, while avoiding dogmatic or one-dimensional interpretations. The sources were selected based on three criteria: (a) their theoretical centrality to the discussion of death and the continuity of life, (b) their representativeness in various fields of knowledge (philosophy, technology, ecology, poetry) and (c) their chronological and geographical diversity, in order to ensure polyphony. More specifically, with regard to the technological axis, the analysis bases the ethics of the beyond on three contemporary principles of artificial intelligence ethics: the principle of responsibility (preservation of digital integrity), the principle of transparency (explainability of the storage algorithm) and the principle of sustainability (sustainable management of the digital footprint).

Thus, the concept of "afterlife" aims to open new avenues for the philosophy of existence, for the ethics of responsibility towards future generations and for the understanding of human creativity itself as a form of continuity. The term "afterlife" used here should not, however, be understood as a temporal projection into a distant or metaphysical future. It is not a deferred continuity, but a continuity that is already unfolding in life itself. In this sense, *Metazoë* does not wait for death to begin. It is born wherever human existence is experienced with the awareness that its effects transcend its duration. This shift subtly shifts the question of what comes next to how to live with what remains. Life after death is thus redefined not as an event, but as a horizon – as a silent pressure exerted by the future on the present.

2. From mechanics to meaning: the phenomenological turn

The structural mechanisms of Metazoë have been described in detail elsewhere, particularly with regard to the technical implementation of digital immortality and the biological recycling of matter in the biosphere (Oikonomou, 2025). In previous analyses, we mapped out the "architecture of continuity": how algorithms can maintain behavioural patterns thanks to "deathbots" and how organic decomposition contributes to ecological regeneration. Here, we deliberately avoid repeating these technical specifications or biogeochemical cycles.

Although these mechanisms explain how continuity is achieved technically and materially, they do not answer the phenomenological question of what it means for humans to exist in an immaterial or distributed state. The need to move from mechanics to meaning is underscored by the current pace of change. As humanity moves towards a rapidly changing future – a development brilliantly analysed by Alvin Toffler and recently revisited in the context of the adaptability of the education system and future sustainability (Oikonomou et al., 2025) – the challenge we face is not only one of technological survival, but also of ontological coherence. The 'collapse of the future' in our era no longer concerns only information overload, but also the abolition of the fundamental distinction between presence and absence.

In a world where digital traces can simulate life and where biological matter is understood as a planetary flow, the binary distinction between "living" and "dead" is no longer sufficient. Technology provides the tools of timelessness, but it does not provide the language to understand it. To understand the post-human in depth, we must therefore turn to those who mapped this field before computer scientists: poets and philosophers. In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological research and in the poetic intuitions of Rilke and Pindar, we find the necessary vocabulary to describe the experience of continuity beyond the biological body.

3. Rilke's invisible: the precursor of digital presence

Rilke's concept of the inner space of the world almost foreshadows the digital cloud. For Rilke, humanity's ultimate task was to transform the visible earth into invisible vibration. In the age of Metazoë, this poetic metaphor becomes literal: we

transform our physical lives into invisible data streams and thus achieve the "invisible existence" that the poet dreamed of. In his *Duino Elegies*, Rilke deals with the fleeting nature of human existence. Unlike "angels-- beings of absolute reality and permanence – humans are characterised by their ephemeral nature. Rilke wonders how we can protect our experiences from disappearing. His answer is 'transubstantiation': We must internalise the visible world so that it is 'invisibly' resurrected within us. As he announces in *Elegy IX*:

Earth, is this not what you want: an invisible rebirth within us? Is it not your dream to one day become invisible? Earth! Invisible!

But even before it ends up in a technical application, Rilke's realisation operates at the level of lived experience. The "invisible rebirth" he refers to requires neither a server nor a file to happen. It manifests itself whenever the visible world is carefully internalised, when experiences can be stored in memory, language and movements. In this sense, *Metazoë* appears first as an existential condition rather than a digital outcome: a way of living the ephemeral without reducing it to loss. Rilke does not promise survival; he teaches full consciousness. What lasts is not the ego as identity, but the world as it has passed through a human life. In the context of *Metazoë*, this "invisible reappearance" finds an astonishing technical application. When we upload our memories, voices and behaviours to digital repositories, we perform an act of transformation à la Rilke. We remove the materiality from the "visible" (the biological body, the physical photo album, the handwritten letter) and translate it into the "invisible" code of the digital world. Server farms and cloud architectures become the new interior space of the world, a vast interior space in which the traces of humanity are preserved without their physical weight.

Furthermore, Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* offer a framework for understanding presence without substance. In his description of the power of music (and therefore language), Rilke writes that Orpheus built "temples in their ears." This suggests an architecture of pure information—a structure that exists only in the act of receiving and decoding, like a digital avatar or chatbot that "exists" only when we interact with it. Therefore, digital life after death should not be seen merely as simulation or a "ghost in the machine." From Rilke's ontological point of view, it is the fulfilment of the human need to save what is ephemeral. The transition from biological life to afterlife is not a loss of reality, but a migration to the "invisible," where the essence of the subject is preserved as a pure model and dynamic.

4. The ontology of Kleos: Pindar as a theorist of the afterlife

If Rilke provides the interiority of the afterlife – the transformation of the world into an invisible interior space – the ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar provides its exteriority: the construction of an artificial body from language to defy time. Long before the concept of uploading consciousness to a server appeared, Pindar formulated the mechanisms of *kleos apthiton* ('immortal glory'). In Pindar's *Epinomia*, biological life is presented as fragile and ephemeral, a famous description of the 'dream of a shadow' (*skias onar*). Faced with this biological finitude, Pindar offers not a metaphysical afterlife in Hades, but an immortality constructed in the text. The ode serves as a "vehicle-- which the poet often compares to a ship or a chariot – that carries the essence of the victor across the sea of time.

Pindar's approach is strikingly similar to the logic of modern digital archiving. Just as Pindar extracts the "virtue"(arete) of the athlete and encodes it in the metrical structure of the poem, so digital archivists extract user behaviour data and encode it in algorithms. In both cases, the goal is the same: to create an "audio body" or a "digital body" that remains when the biological body disappears. Furthermore, the Greek concept of truth, *aletheia*, can be literally translated as "not forgetting"(a-lethe). For Pindar, the function of art (*techne*) is to combat *Lethe* (oblivion). In the context of *Metazoë*, technology takes on this function of Pindar. Blockchain, cloud storage, and artificial intelligence robots are essentially "truth machines," technologies developed to prevent the erasure of the subject (see Bollier & Rauch, 2019).

We can therefore consider Pindar not only as a eulogistic poet, but also as one of the first theorists of *Metazoë*. He understood that in order to survive beyond its biological lifespan, human presence must be translated into a medium that is sustainable, reproducible, and public. Whether this medium is the oral tradition of ancient Greece or the global networks of the 21st century, the ontological imperative remains the same: to replace the mortal body with a body made of information. In this sense, *Metazoë* does not impose a moral system or a set of regulatory rules. Instead, it cultivates a moral sensitivity – a silent responsibility towards the traces we leave behind. This sensitivity does not operate through rules, but through care: care for language, memory, the material world, and the future readers or heirs of our own presence. Such an ethic remains deliberately fragile. It resists codification precisely because it is rooted more in full awareness than in obligation. *Metazoë*

refers here to an ethic of continuity – not as a duty, but as an awareness.

5. Conclusion: Metazoë as an aesthetic imperative

The study of Metazoë through the lens of Rilke's poetry and Pindar's ode shows that transcending biological limits is not a new technological invention, but a continuous human quest. While our previous analysis focused on the structural continuity of systems (Oikonomou, 2025), this phenomenological study suggests that continuity is essentially an act of language. Whether through the "immortal glory" (kleos aphthiton) of ancient Greece or through the binary code of modern "deathbots," the underlying motivation remains the same: the transfer of mortal experience into a permanent medium. However, considering the dizzying speed of change described by Toffler – a "future shock" that now extends to the very definition of life and death (Oikonomou et al., 2025) – technological solutions alone are not enough. We conclude that treating digital life after death as mere data storage carries the risk of a meaningless eternity. Instead, adopting Rilke's poetic ontology, we can consider digital space as a new interior space – an interior space in which human presence is not only archived but also aesthetically preserved.

Future research could examine the functioning of Metazoë in empirical contexts: how it appears in the collective memory of communities, how it shapes educational practices that connect the present with future generations, or how it influences the cultural politics of memory in museums and digital archives. Such an approach would allow the concept to be transferred from the purely theoretical level to that of social action and political application. Ultimately, the essence of afterlife does not lie in a definitive answer to the question of 'beyond death', but in the recognition that 'beyond death' is always present, distributed in our relationships, our works and the world we leave behind.

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