

ON WHAT WE WANT, WHEN WE SAY THAT WE DON'T WANT TO DIE.

Some philosophical reflections on the rationality of “dying off” and “living on”

Peter Gaitsch

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1 Jonas, H.

1 Scheler, M.

As it is well known, Kant divided the domain of philosophical inquiry into three questions: *What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?* The latter question, the question that constitutes the core of philosophy of religion, is orientated towards acquiring rational justification for what to believe. However, this kind of questioning is not a straightforward quest for truth and knowledge, but is meant instead as a way to provide a broad rational framework for various conceivable answers to questions regarding religious hope. Thus, we should not expect from philosophy of religion to provide us with *the one and only* rational answer. Instead, philosophy of religion takes on a more preliminary task of investigating the rational grounds for any religious hope.

A classic theistic hope, which is intrinsically linked with the expectance of the afterlife, is the hope for an immortal soul. However, based on previous considerations, the role of philosophy of religion is not so much to argue *for or against* the existence of an immortal soul, but rather to decide on the rational justification for the underlying human hope by way of elaborating on its conceivable significance for human life. In this light, the following question turns out to be of crucial importance: what may we actually rationally want, when we say that we don't want to die?

My first suggestion is that a conceivable answer should meet two constraints. (1) *A naturalistic constraint*: Our philosophical answer should not be rooted in a “supernaturalist” belief, that is, in a metaphysical view on the transcendent origin of nature. That is to say, we should try to construe the survival of death within the framework of the so-called “religious naturalism”, destined to be compatible with modern natural sciences, an idea recently developed by Mark Johnston in his book *Surviving Death* (Johnston 2010). (2) *An existentialist constraint*: Our philosophical answer should be responsive to the modern predominance of immanent self-concern bound

* Peter Gaitsch, peter.gaitsch@uni-graz.at, University of Graz

to human finiteness. As pointed out by Hans Jonas, this constraint includes that we willingly throw ourselves “into the waters of mortality” (Jonas 1962, 6), and that, for the most part, we are not inclined to live on, let alone *to live forever*. So, in “modern temper”, the wish to survive one’s death becomes, in the eyes of the many, a strange, even obscene, desire of the few. Both constraints, the naturalistic and the existentialist, require that we don’t conceive of personal afterlife in terms of an immortal substantial soul or a pure spirit detached from the human body, since there is no room in scientific and existential insights for personal life that allegedly dwells beyond organic bodies.

Given these constraints, the conclusion seems *prima facie* overwhelmingly simple: We are rationally not permitted to wish for an afterlife. However, in what follows, I will try to avoid this hasty conclusion by presenting two general philosophical attempts for allowing the rational acceptance of afterlife, the first one allowing for a *personal bodily afterlife* without any reference to a substantial soul, the second one allowing for an *anonymous spiritual afterlife*, but without any reference to a personal afterlife at all.

1. *A desire to live on: Posthumanist and moralist conceptions of personal bodily afterlife*

To begin with, we should consider the fact that human beings seem to have a natural desire to live on endlessly. This natural desire is a consequence of what is called the *deprivation theory of death* and what we may also call the *common sense view* on all matters related to death. Namely, we all tend to think of death as a bad thing, because we understand it as a loss of life, as a deprivation of existential possibilities (cf. Nagel 1979). Death is a misfortune, simply because we lose something by dying, namely some possibilities of personal life. But note that this commonsensical view on death is connected with a particular view on life. In my experience of life, I seem to be confronted with “an essentially open-ended possible future”, which doesn’t reveal any built-in natural limit, for “there is no limit to the amount of life that it would be good to have” (Nagel 1979, 10). Thus, life is basically conceived of as an *ascending linear process*, which doesn’t strive for closure, but for continuation; as an immanently endless process, which gets brutally interrupted by an exogenous catastrophe, by the event of death.

This view on life, as a linear process of self-continuation, which is not internally related to death, gives rise to various technological, mostly science-fiction, programs for realizing the personal bodily afterlife. Some advocates of those human enhancement technologies, like Nick Bostrom, call themselves *transhumanists*. Their vision of salvation is that “such enhancements may make us, or our descendants, ‘posthuman’, beings who may have indefinite health-spans, much greater intellectual faculties than any cur-

rent human being — and perhaps entirely new sensibilities or modalities — as well as the ability to control their own emotions” (Bostrum 2005). The crypto-religious core of the transhumanist movement is that it is stimulated by the idea that life might be immortalized by technological means, thereby inducing a posthuman afterlife. Accordingly, transhumanists essentially understand personal life as something that could be freed from the basic biological limits of the human condition, such as the limitation of the human lifespan by aging and death (cf. Bostrum 2003).

Later on I purport to show what is essentially wrong with this picture of life and death founding a technologically supported personal afterlife. But for the moment, let us give transhumanism some credit by provisionally granting the viability of its project, so that we may ask ourselves: What do we gain by “exploring the posthuman realm” (Bostrum 2003) in a posthuman afterlife? I suggest that the answer turns out to be: *More of the same*. Namely, contrary to what Bostrum seems to believe, the realization of posthuman afterlife doesn’t open up the other world, qualitatively different from ours (what we may call “heaven”), but the same world that we live in today, which, although quantitatively enhanced, still reveals the same “large-scale structural defects” (Johnston 2010, 17) of human life. On a similar note, Johnston argues that “cryonics and the like are not the sort of things that could even begin to address the threat of death to the importance of goodness” (Johnston 2010, 13).

According to Johnston, death is a “large-scale structural defect”, because it threatens our on-going capacity for advocating what is morally good: In the face of death, we tend to lose all confidence in *the importance of goodness* and become desperate. Given this diagnosis, Johnston intends to demonstrate how we can conceive of a kind of personal afterlife that supports the importance of goodness without violating any laws of natural science. We have already seen that the transhumanist outlook on the afterlife doesn’t meet this essential condition, because the hidden incentive of the transhumanist project is not the importance of the good, but simply the natural tendency to live on indefinitely. Put differently, transhumanism doesn’t reveal any serious rational motive for truly wanting an afterlife, since everything that transhumanists imagine might already be accomplished in the course of our lifetime (generating new thoughts or new feelings, controlling emotions, etc.). Thus, their fantasies of self-improvement are not a sufficient ground for being rationally justified in wanting an afterlife.

However, and as already noted, there exists a more promising justification for conceiving of a personal afterlife: following Johnston and Kant, one might turn to the implications of the importance of the good, which is threatened by death. We may think, for instance, of all the past social injustices in the history of human life, which were eternalized and sealed

by death. In the face of all of this innocent suffering and dying, we easily become morally discouraged: to follow moral obligation in this world seems amounting to an existential absurdity. For this reason, Kant postulates personal afterlife, since “[m]orality implies a natural promise: otherwise it could not impose any obligation upon us. We owe obedience only to those who can protect us. Morality only cannot protect us.” (Kant 1981, 82) According to Kant, we may rationally hope for a personal afterlife so as to see morality gaining power over life as a whole. Following Kant on this point, Johnston spells out this promise of survival implied in morality, but in a thoroughly naturalistic non-dualistic way, that is, without any reference to the existence of a substantial soul.

In Johnston’s sophisticated account, the crucial point is revealed through a critical reflection on the status of our selves. Consider the following self-reflection that every one of us can perform on one’s own. I am immediately given to myself as being here, at the center of my “arena of presence”, in which the world appears to me. Being a self thus fundamentally means being an arena of presence. With some reference to the Buddhist *anatta*-doctrine, Johnston argues that this arena of presence is owned by no-one. Put differently, there is *no persisting self across time*, because there are no definable conditions of identity for the arena of presence that I currently enact. For this reason, I simply cannot tell that my arena of presence will ever come to an end, which implies “the impossibility of my own death” (Johnston 2010, 126). But our deathlessness is only the flip side of being “creatures of the unreal”, which are in the final analysis not worth caring for (cf. Johnston 2010, 225, 234).

However, this is not to say that there are no persons. For, according to Johnston, the denial of persisting selves opens up the room for an alternative and radically revisionary understanding of personal identity, with an explicitly Protean character: We as persons are not persisting selves, but depend on the various scope of our future-directed concerns, on our practical disposition for self-identification. We may restrict our self-identification egocentrically to the human organisms, which arbitrarily appear at the center of our arenas of presence; from this ordinary disposition, it follows that we will personally die as soon as our respective bodies die. But we may also *enlarge* our personal identity by means of self-identification with all present and future human organisms and individual personalities around the world; then, we will personally live on in other human embodiments, whenever this particular human organism, currently at the center of the respective arena of presence, dies off. This is precisely the path of *agape* followed by morally good people, namely “the command to treat oneself as if one were an arbitrary other” (Johnston 2010, 236). To sum up, the importance of goodness is not threatened by death, because, for a morally good person, the death of

an individual personality currently at the center of her respective arena of presence is not a great loss — she might even feel that she lives on in other individual personalities. The “Religion of humanity”, according to Johnston, can be summed up by such a “living on in the onward rush of humanity” (Johnston 2010, 331).

But, again, we should ask ourselves: what do we gain by such a sophisticated account of a morally-grounded personal afterlife? There is a certain dilemma at play. On the one hand, this revisionary view of personality seems to be so far removed from what we daily experience as our personal life that it is difficult to see why we may still call it an account of personality and personal survival — we feel that it is *too little* concerned with our personalities. But, on the other hand, if, as a reply, one wishes to stress the point that the practice of *agape* does indeed imply some kind of *personal* afterlife, then we feel that the present account is *too much* concerned with our personalities, for we feel that the importance of goodness doesn’t really rely on our personal fate, but on the fate of humanity as a whole, unrelated to my disposition to personal identification — a point recently elaborated by Samuel Scheffler in his book *Death and the Afterlife* (2013), in which the author reflects on a doomsday scenario similar to the infertility scenario of the novel/film *Children of Men*:

“[...] there are many projects and activities whose importance to us is not diminished by the prospect of our own deaths but would be diminished by the prospect that everyone else will soon die. So if by the afterlife we mean the continuation of human life on earth after our own deaths, then it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in some significant respects, *the existence of the afterlife matters more to us than our own continued existence*. It matters more to us because it is a condition of other things mattering to us. Without confidence in the existence of the afterlife, many of the things in our own lives that now matter to us would cease to do so or would come to matter less.” (Scheffler 2013, 26; my emphasis)

In other words, we can discover that our own death or survival doesn’t really have serious implications for the fate of goodness and other matters pertaining to value. In this sense, the point of view adopted by Johnston still reveals some egocentric bias. Without any reference to Johnston, Scheffler concludes:

“In certain concrete functional and motivational respects, the fact that we and everyone we love will cease to exist matters less to us than would the nonexistence of future people whom we do not know and who, indeed, have no determinate identities. Or to put it more positively, the coming into existence of people we do not know and love matters more to us than our own survival and the survival of the people we do know and love. Even allowing for the likelihood that some portion of our concern for these future people is a concern for the survival of particular groups with which we specially identify, this is a remarkable fact which should get more attention than it does in thinking about the nature and limits of our personal egoism.” (Scheffler 2013, 45)

Considerations such as these are also supported by Hans Jonas, who argues against any “moral claim” to a personal afterlife (Jonas 1962, 18), and by Max Scheler, who points to the replaceability of any individual with regard to the fulfillment of the moral task (Scheler 1957, 56).

2. *Happily dying off: The dialectic of personal life and the impersonal spiritual afterlife*

Let us now turn to the previously announced critical review of the picture of life as an endless linear process interrupted by the event of death. This criticism applies not only to the idea of posthumanist personal afterlife treated earlier, but also to the morally-grounded personal afterlife, as elaborated by Johnston. The crucial point to understand is that all organic life, but especially personal life,¹ is not only empirically, but *essentially temporally limited*. Put differently, I argue that death is *not* an exogenous event, but an *a priori of life*. The argument comes in three versions,

- (1) the version based on the temporal structure of lived-experience (Scheler 1957),
- (2) the version based on the relation between character and categorical desire (Williams 1973), and
- (3) the version based on the relation between value-laden life and temporal scarcity (Scheffler 2013).

(1) The most basic justification of the *a priori* of death stems from the analysis of the temporal structure of lived-experience. According to Scheler, the (retentional) impact of passed lived-experiences is such that the “life already lived (*gelebtes Leben*)” is steadily growing, thereby effecting a proportional shrinkage of the “life to live (*zu lebendes Leben*)”, which is yet to come (cf. Scheler 1957, 18pp.). Thus, the line followed by the process of life is not linear, but curved (cf. Plessner 1975, 146). In this respect, death is structurally already present in the course of my temporal consciousness. Its presence manifests itself in my experience of a change in direction from ascending to descending life, which for the first time reveals that my future is fading. In the process of living towards my “natural death”, life thus manifests itself as a “closed totality (*geschlossene Totalität*)” (Scheler 1957, 23).

1 A psychophysically neutral account of life might even show that all processes of organic life follow *a priori* a curved line, hereby preparing the exogenous event of death. In this sense, Plessner’s intention is to mediate between *empiricist* and *a priori* theories of death by introducing the notion of *Schicksalsformen des Lebens* („life’s forms of destiny“): “Noch ist eine dritte [Möglichkeit] offen: der Tod ist dem Leben unmittelbar äußerlich und unwesentlich, wird jedoch *durch die lebensweltliche Form der Entwicklung mittelbar zum unbedingten Schicksal des Lebens.*“ (1975, 148; my emphasis)

(2) In another version, established by Bernard Williams, it is shown that immortality, or any “excessively long life” (Scheffler 2013, 91), would inevitably lead to a “tedious” state for the human being, because the meaning of human life is the formation of a particular character driven by certain “categorical desires” in response to the world. Death, as a constitutive moment of the meaning of life, is thus the seal of the completion of this particular formation process, which animates a personal life. In the words of Williams: “[...] I am going to suggest that the supposed contingencies are not really contingencies; that an endless life would be a meaningless one; and that we could have no reason for living eternally a human life. There is no desirable or significant property which life would have more of, or have more unqualifiedly, if we lasted for ever.” (Williams 1973, 89) This consideration gives rise to a particular dialectical conception of human life, to which I will turn in an instant.

(3) Finally, Scheffler points out that the eternal life would be no intelligible personal life at all, for it would call into question “the conditions under which the attitude of valuing comes to play an important role in human life” (Scheffler 2013, 99). More specifically, human goals, challenges, and satisfactions, depend on a life as a “progression of stages” (*ibid.* 96), which opens up a temporally bounded play of human activity. For example, we cannot conceive of a truly human decision unless under the condition of temporal scarcity. Scheffler therefore concludes:

“A life without temporal boundaries would no more be a life than a circle without a circumference would be a circle. So whatever the eternal existence of a being might be like, it would not be just like our lives only more so. The statement that death is essential to our concept of a life is not merely a trivial truth resting on a stipulative definition of ‘life.’ It is a substantive observation which reminds us that the aspects of life that we cherish most dearly—love and labor, intimacy and achievement, creativity and humor and solidarity and all the rest—all have the status of *values* for us because of their role in our finite and bounded lives.” (Scheffler 2013, 100)

The main point seems to be that it is not our own personal death that threatens the meaning of life, but, first, the death of the others, and second, my own deathlessness: “what is necessary to sustain our confidence in our values is that we should die and that others should live” (*ibid.* 108). We can take this as a concluding remark for all philosophical matters on personal afterlife: we are not rationally justified to want a personal afterlife, for the dynamic of personal life is such that it doesn’t tolerate any substantial immortalization.

We should also keep hold of the most general result behind this, namely, the basic *dialectic* of human life leading straight to the particular dilemma of any idea of personal afterlife. On the one hand, to live is essentially to

strive for the life yet to come or to *transcend* the life already lived. This is the crucial point of what Scheffler calls the paradox of life: „The real problem is that one’s reasons to live are, in a sense, reasons not to live as oneself. It is I who wants to live, but I want to live by losing myself — by not being me. That is the paradox or puzzle that, if Williams is correct, lies at the heart of human experience, and rather than being a consequence of immortality, it is always with us mortals.“ (Scheffler 2013, 95) Put differently, vitality is not self-preservation, but *exteriorization* by concern for the world. But, on the other hand, if there were no self to preserve, there would not be any striving for a life yet to come. For this reason, life is not only self-transcendence, but also *interiorization*, a process that we can observe in the formation of a personal character. A flourishing personal life encompasses both movements at the same time: ever regaining oneself by ever losing oneself. This dialectic of personal life *necessarily* comes to an end, because it is no formal zero-sum game, but a progressive process of maturing that leads to a definite result (ideally, by climbing to an Aristotelian “acme”), to a personal character finally sealed by aging and natural death. It follows that, those who complain about mortality as such, don’t understand what life is.

This dialectic of personal life brings about a particular *epistemic dilemma* about any idea of personal afterlife. The dilemma consists in the following: *Either* we conceive of the afterlife based on our familiarity with life in this world, as we should² — but then this idea becomes meaningless, as we have just seen in respect to life’s entanglement with death; *or* we conceive of afterlife as something totally strange and unfamiliar to our previous experience with life (e.g., as a *visio beatifica* eternally contemplating the greatness of God) — but then this idea loses all its intelligibility for us, thus turning the idea of afterlife into a random fantasy and making impossible any rational hope. Scheffler expresses the same doubt: “Problems such as these put pressure on us to move, as many have in any case wanted to move, toward a reconceptualization of immortality as involving a kind of noncorporeal existence which would be sufficiently unlike ordinary life on earth as to sidestep these issues. But to suspend in this way all the constraints imposed by

- 2 As Scheler rightly points out, questions of afterlife should be kept in continuity with questions of our present state of lived-experience, or „Fortleben“ should follow „Erleben“: „Die Art unserer Problemstellung zeigt, daß auf alle Fälle die Frage des Fortlebens nach dem Tode ganz und gar abhängig ist von einer Reihe Fragen unseres Er-lebens während unseres Lebens. Niemand kann anders *fortleben*, als er schon derzeit — *lebt*, oder schärfer: sein Leben und das, was in ihm sich vor ihm auftut, *er-lebt*. Ich finde nichts verwunderlicher, als es die Art ist, wie man gemeinhin diese große Frage behandelt; ich finde kaum einen Ausdruck für dies Verwunderliche. Man scheint zu meinen, es könne der Tod — gleichgültig, ob es ein Fort-leben gibt oder nicht — irgendein Gesetz zur Aufhebung bringen, das schon während des Lebens waltet: so, als ob der Tod einfach das große Wunder wäre, nach dem eben ‚alles anders ist‘.“ (Scheler 1957, 61)

our biology — by our nature as organisms — is to make it even clearer that we are no longer thinking of a human life in any recognizable sense at all.“ (Scheffler 2013, 98) *Either meaningless or unintelligible*: both consequences are ruinous for our idea of personal afterlife.³

In my final part, I want to suggest a way out of the dilemma. My solution is based on the observation that the dialectical “regaining by losing” personal life already gives a hint that afterlife might not be bound to matters of personal survival, insofar as *losing one’s personality is essentially part of what constitutes life as a process*. In other words, personal life is always already traversed by a movement of transcending personal life.⁴ With this in mind, my suggestion is that an *impersonal* or *anonymous* spiritual afterlife might be conceptualized in an *intelligible* way. There are at least two viable (and, in the final analysis, related) conceptions of an anonymous afterlife, which remain within naturalistic and existentialist constraints,

- (1) the afterlife by way of the “eternity of the spirit” (Scheler 1957, 38),⁵
- (2) the afterlife by way of the “immortality of deeds” (Jonas 1962, 10).

(1) To speak of the eternity of the spirit is not necessarily a metaphysical supposition, for we experience eternity whenever we perform mental acts intending timeless unities of sense, which transcend our temporal condition. In this sense, the idea of the eternity of the spirit is not an intellectualist bias towards an afterlife, insofar as living a full personal life always implies developing and incorporating “matters/complexions of sense (*Sinnzusammenhänge*)”, which, although articulated in the process of life, are essentially independent from it (Scheler 1957, 40). Take, for instance, friendship: if I died an untimely death in a car accident, this would not be the end of my friendship to my closest friends, because death (different from betrayal) is

- 3 According to Schleiermacher, we might even argue that the desire for a personal afterlife is *irreligious*: „Erinnert Euch, wie in ihr [religion] alles darauf hinstrebt, daß die scharf abgeschnittenen Umrisse unserer Persönlichkeit sich erweitern und *sich allmählich verlieren sollen ins Unendliche*, daß wir durch das Anschauen des Universums soviel als möglich eins werden sollen mit ihm; sie [most people] aber sträuben sich gegen das Unendliche, sie wollen nicht hinaus, sie wollen nichts sein als sie selbst und sind ängstlich besorgt um ihre Individualität.“ (Schleiermacher 1969, 87; my emphasis)
- 4 Compare, for instance, the citation of Schleiermacher in Fn. 3. Furthermore, the dictum of Lorenzo de Medici as mentioned by Goethe could be interpreted in a similar vein: Those who have no hope for another life, are already dead for this life: „[...] ich möchte mit Lorenzo de Medici sagen, daß alle diejenigen auch für dieses Leben tot sind, die kein anderes hoffen [...]“ (cited by Scheler 1957, 51).
- 5 Scheler also establishes an interesting and detailed phenomenological account of personal afterlife (Scheler 1957, 41pp.); but it can be shown that his account turns out to be dependent on the highly questionable assumption that *Leib* (“lived body”) and *Körper* (“living body”) are essentially independent from each other, so that a person is *not* essentially its living body (although it essentially *has* its living body, as Scheler concedes).

for those who survive not a justifiable reason to end a friendship. Therefore, I may trust that our friendship as a more-than-personal or even impersonal matter of meaning will live on after my personal death (cf. Scheler 1957, 41). Note that this conception doesn't simply refer to the famous "immortality of name" (Jonas 1962, 3) or the related "immortality of influence" (*ibid.* 4), but instead relies on the fact that personal life is open to *incorporate* impersonal universal meaning.

(2) The conception of the "immortality of deeds" focuses on the *impersonal importance* of our "moments of decision, when our whole being is involved" (Jonas 1962, 7) and when "we feel as if acting under the eyes of eternity" (*ibid.*).⁶ Jonas resumes two traditional metaphors to articulate the metaphysical setting of this feeling of eternity: We may feel that our deeds were registered in the "Book of Life", so that "deeds inscribe *themselves* in an eternal memoir of time" (Jonas 1962, 10). Alternatively, in a more *panentheist* vein, we may feel that we are responsible for God's ownmost "adventure in mortality" (*ibid.* 15), that is, the "self-forfeiture of divine integrity for the sake of unprejudiced becoming" (*ibid.* 14) — then our deeds count as our personal contribution to the immanent reconstitution of the broken transcendent *image* of God, a process which is the ultimate meaning of the existence of the world and the evolution of life. In this sense, our deeds are our share in God's immortal image: "[...] in this awesome impact of his deeds on God's destiny, on the very complexion of eternal being, lies the immortality of man" (Jonas 1962, 16). More precisely, the human person is not immortal in itself, but is the "mortal trustee of an immortal cause" (*ibid.* 17).

Where does this leave us? The reader will recall the starting point of Johnston's philosophical effort to rationally grant personal survival: the importance of goodness threatened by death. It now appears that the importance of goodness and other values is not saved by our personal afterlife, but by our *personal devotion to an impersonal immortal cause*, be it the more-than-personal matters of sense that we are able to incorporate in our temporally bounded lives, or be it the image of God that we help reconstituting by our deeds.

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6 An interesting clue is that the kind of immortality that comes with the moment of decision dismisses any entanglement with duration or lastingness: "[...] not what lasts longest in our experience, but what lasts shortest and is intrinsically most adverse to lastingness, may turn out to be that which binds the mortal to the immortal" (Jonas 1962, 9).

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Abstract

ON WHAT WE WANT, WHEN WE SAY THAT WE DON'T WANT TO DIE

A classic theistic hope, which is intrinsically linked with the expectance of the afterlife, is the hope for an immortal soul. However, the role of philosophy of religion is not so much to argue for or against the existence of an immortal soul, but rather to decide on the rational justification for the underlying human hope by way of elaborating on its conceivable significance for human life. In this light, the question arises, what we may actually rationally want, when we say that we don't want to die. Two general philosophical attempts for allowing the rational expectance of an afterlife are presented, the first one allowing for a *personal bodily afterlife* without reference to a substantial soul, the second one allowing for an *anonymous spiritual afterlife* without reference to a personal afterlife. Considering personal bodily afterlife, I critically discuss the transhumanist conception of life as a linear process of self-continuation not internally related to death, as well as a moralist foundation for a personal survival in the face of the importance of goodness threatened by death. The subsequent sketch of the *dialectic of personal life* intends to establish, first, that personal life is essentially temporally limited (death is an *a priori* of life), and secondly, that the idea of a personal afterlife is burdened by an epistemic dilemma, insofar as it reveals to be either meaningless or unintelligible. To resolve this dilemma, a conception of an *intelligible impersonal afterlife* is introduced, which is based on the existential devotion to an impersonal immortal cause.

KEY WORDS: afterlife, death, dialectic of life, finiteness, Hans Jonas, immortality, life, Max Scheler.

