

Phenomenology of the Self

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In this project, I will be utilizing a phenomenological method to investigate the self or *ego* as it functions in experience. Phenomenology is a philosophical movement inaugurated by Edmund Husserl that emphasizes a return “to the things themselves,” by analyzing the first-person structure of experience. Specifically, I will examine a debate in this field about whether every conscious experience contains a subject (ego) or whether consciousness is essentially bereft of an ego prior to self-reflection. My prediction is that egological and non-egological theories of self are ultimately reconcilable. Because I am conducting research in phenomenology, my methodology is analytical and qualitative. I will trace the ideas of self found in the work of early phenomenologists, namely Husserl, while integrating the work of contemporary researchers in philosophy, cognitive science, and psychology. This investigation may have value for the multidisciplinary study of consciousness currently being carried out around the world.