

# METODO. INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### *Self and Singularity*

Editors: Till Grohmann and Stefan Kristensen

Deadline: December 31, 2018

Inquiries into the structure and the life of the self have become very rich and widespread in recent years. Particularly in the field of contemporary phenomenology and philosophy of mind (broadly understood), this topic is central and widely discussed. According to the works of D. Zahavi, S. Gallagher, E. Thompson and a few others, self-awareness is a “built-in feature” of any human experience, a quality irreducibly present in any intentional act. Tacit self-referentiality somehow holds the self together, defining both its extension and limits. As the self’s constitutive ground, however, self-awareness stays paradoxically anonymous. Even though it is considered as the operative dimension through which the “mineness” of all experience occurs, self-awareness is not seen as implying singularizing features nor does it seem to alter between individuals, ages and socio-political settings. There are indeed good reasons to question this “purity” of self-awareness. The anonymous, purely operative dimension of the self stands thus in a paradoxical relationship with its concrete unfolding as a singularity.

In order to unfold this paradox it might be useful to consider the close dialogue which relates the current approach to self and subjectivity with other disciplines, such as developmental psychology for instance. A few other disciplines could be taken into account, particularly psychoanalysis and psychopathology, but also gender

studies, postcolonial and critical race studies. Connected to the phenomenological concept of self-awareness these theoretical frameworks might be able to exhibit the inner link between self, self-awareness and singularity. Without blurring conceptual distinctions and useful analytical categories, a critical dialogue with these approaches might be able to lay bare the way in which self-awareness is built into the self's singular stream of experience.

As a matter of fact, the problem of the self is essentially the problem of its emergence and its genesis, but also of its decay and disintegration. And all these genetic processes of the self affect in turn self-awareness, i.e. the concrete manner of being present to oneself, to the world, and to others. Developmental psychology offers precious experimental materials about the way a self emerges in a set of emotional, perceptual and sensorimotor relationships to objects and others; cf. the classical studies of Meltzoff discussed by Gallagher, but also the works of Piaget or Gibson which testify to an intriguing proximity to phenomenology. A dialogue with psychoanalytic child psychology (M. Klein, F. Dolto) might furthermore allow to introduce a new sort of question, such as the extent to which the dynamics of desire enter into the emergence of the self. Psychopathology raises the question of the stability of self and its limits. Recent approaches in psychopathology of schizophrenia from Sass and Parnas put forth a tacit disintegration of experience's all encompassing structure of self-presence. In addition, a dialogue with gender studies (I. M. Young, J. Butler) would allow to question the importance of sexual difference in the formation of a singular self and the experience of personal identity. The confrontation with race and postcolonial studies (F. Fanon, E. Glissant, A. Mbembe) would allow to question the crucial role of the gaze of the other and asymmetric power relations in the formation of the self.

Through this special issue of *Metodo*, we would like to foster the exchange between the becoming of a self and the experience of its singularity. By referring phenomenology to the applied fields of developmental psychology, gender and race studies, psychoanalysis

and psychopathology, we ask for a confrontation of transcendental and genetic phenomenology with research outcome from the human sciences. In depth analysis on empirical and factual experiences in concrete socio-cultural settings should serve as an appropriate occasion for thinking the self's singularity in its very complexity.

Phenomenology can offer some important contributions to this debate. While it may be true that the mainstream of the phenomenological tradition followed the Husserlian project of an epistemology grounded in the first person's experience, we claim the possibility for phenomenological research to describe all types of subjectivation, all modes of emergence of the self, and not only the classical account polarized by epistemological aims.

Suggested topics for this issue include, **but are not limited to**, phenomenological inquiries into:

- psychopathological phenomena,
- relationships between self awareness and body image,
- constructions of imaginary selves,
- embodied gendered experience,
- racial codification of self awareness.

Abstracts and papers should be submitted online. Submitted papers (in English, German, French) must be in accordance with the basic principles of *Metodo*, and follow the Author Guidelines. All contributions will be peer-reviewed by two anonymous referees. The editorial board advises authors writing articles in non native languages to have their texts proofread prior to submission.

Invited contributors:

Kym Maclaren

Ulrike Kadi

Dylan Trigg