

# Reconceptualizing Autoegetic Consciousness

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## Abstract

Autoegetic consciousness (AuC), originally conceptualized as the phenomenological marker distinguishing episodic from semantic retrieval, faces significant empirical challenges. In particular, episodic retrieval was demonstrated orthogonal from phenomenal characters such as sense of ownership. It has thus been argued that AuC is not a valid construct and should be abolished. While we agree with the empirical failure of AuC's original conceptualization, we highlight that the phenomenon pertaining to the construct serves practical significance, particularly in terms of supporting one's sense of self extended through time. Considering empirical cases of dissociations between specific properties pertaining to AuC, including mental time travel, sense of ownership, and introspection, we offer a scientifically-valid reconceptualization of AuC as a specific type of reflective awareness in which explicit metacognition is leveraged to support the sense of personal identity. Under this reconceptualization, episodic retrieval appears as a contingent feature of autoegetic consciousness but not the other way around.