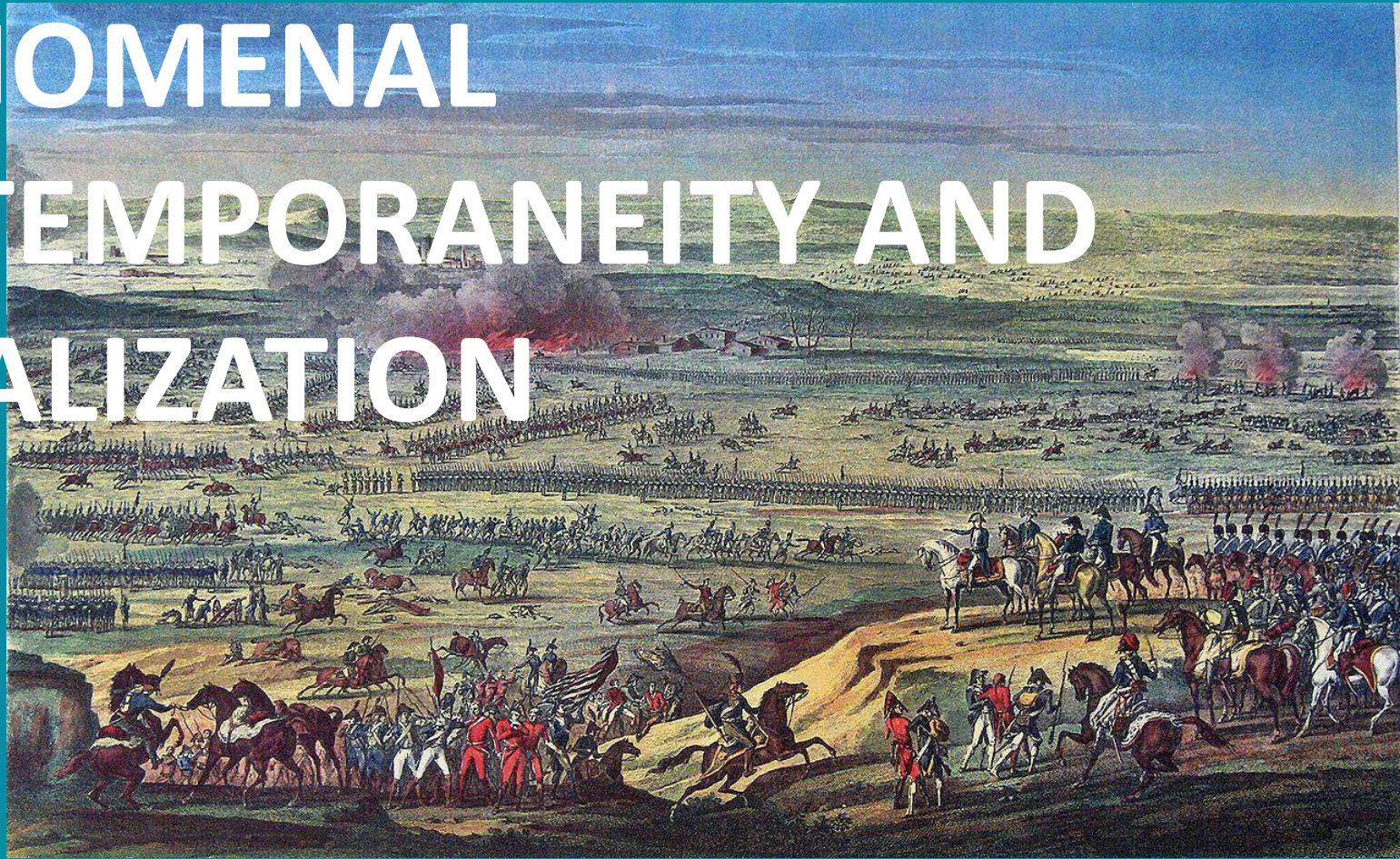


PHENOMENAL CONTEMPORANEITY AND VISUALIZATION



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VISUAL ORGANIZATION

“A visual image has a perspective because objects are represented in it by regions whose size and placement depend on the angles subtended by those objects at some common point in space. The representational scheme of the image is governed by lines of sight converging at a single vantage point, whose location the image suggests but doesn't depict.” (Velleman 2006: 179)



C.W. Eckersberg *Woman In Front of a Mirror* (1841)



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VISUAL ORGANIZATION

- This vantage point is not necessarily *occupied* however, even when the image directly references the viewer. ('structural indifference')
- Velleman: that we think of the position as occupied differentiates *visualization* from *imagined seeing* (including episodic memory and anticipatory imagination)



Joseph Ducreaux *Portrait de l'artiste sous les traits d'un moqueur*, ca. 1793



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TWO PERSPECTIVES

Notional vs. Actual Subjects

- No *necessary* identity between notional and actual subject e.g. Williams' (1973, p. 43) visualizing the battlefield at Austerlitz as seen by Napoleon.
 - What makes episodic memory reflexive in a way that imagined seeing is not? What unites these two subjects in the case of episodic memory but not imagined seeing?
 - "Every memory state comes labeled as such" Wollheim (1999, p. 118). But structural indifference implies this "label" cannot be found within the visual contents of the memory.
- *Notional subject*: the viewer implied by perspectival organization, "the person thought of as occupying the image's vantage point and undergoing the visual impression of which the image is a copy" (Velleman 2006, p. 182).
 - *Actual subject* is the person doing the visualization or having the visual memory.



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PHENOMENAL PROPERTY APPROACHES

- William James: a certain “warmth and intimacy” or “animal heat” attaches to our personal memories but not the memories of others (to which of course we can only have imaginative access, however vivid). (1950, pp. 331-6)
- Wollheim: “sense of familiarity” (1999, p. 118) invested in the remembered event. (Though ultimately rejects phenomenal property approach)
- Compare Hazlit on *anticipation*: “warmth of imagination” and “greater liveliness and force” explain the interest we take in our projected *future* selves (1805: 40)
- These senses would amount to a phenomenal property of co-identity or ownership (perhaps related to what Heidegger called *Jemeinigkeit*, “mineness” or what Zahavi [2007, p. 189] calls a quality of “first-personal givenness”),
- Problem : difficult to point to any phenomenal property that will hold for *all* memories; for whichever phenomenal quality of memory we nominate, “it seems it will be easy enough to find a memory of an earlier self that does not have it, or a memory of another person which does have it.” (Giles 1997: 86)



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NONSTIPULATION APPROACHES

- Wollheim & Velleman: in imagined-seeing I have to stipulate the identity of the notional subject (“I, Napoleon, see Austerlitz”).
- “Without this referential stipulation, my mental image would not be a way of thinking about Napoleon as ‘me,’ and so it wouldn’t be a way of imagining that I am Napoleon” (Velleman, 2006: 187).
- Episodic memory picks out the actual subject as identical with the notional subject precisely by being “unselfconscious about their reference, in that they require no other thought about who they refer to” (2006: 188). “Memory can thus succeed in making someone “me” to me even if he was Napoleon – not, of course, by making him the same person as me, but rather by presenting him to me in the notional first-person” (2006: 192), though of course we can then check this against the causal history of the image to determine whether it is accurate (2006: 188).
- But while Velleman distinguishes between metaphysical identity and psychological reflexivity (and here he’s talking about the latter), perspectival access and a *separability* identity can come apart (cf. Parfit 1984:327)

KIERKEGAARD

Contemporaneity

- Discussed primarily in relation to believer's knowledge of the Incarnation;
- Cancels distinction between 'historical contemporary' and 'follower at second hand' (1985: 103/1997b: 299).

Samtidig lit. 'same-time-ness;' means 'contemporaneity' or 'simultaneity'

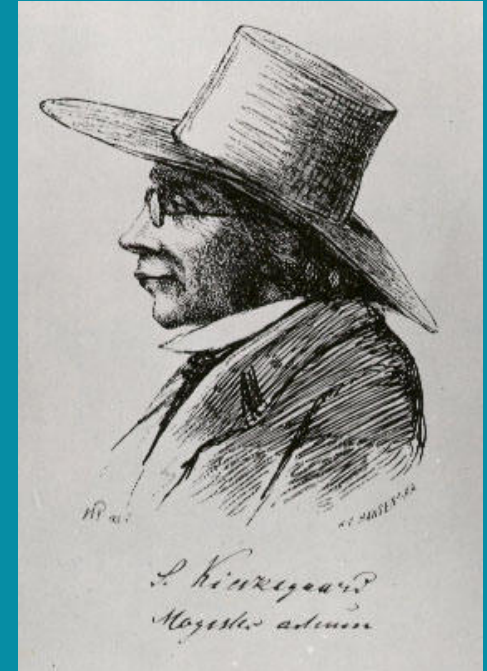


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CONTEMPORANEITY

Features

- Believer sees the incarnation with the 'autopsy of faith' (*autos + optos*, 'inspection for oneself')
- So the believer experiences the event with a property of *direct presence*, a property of being "right in front of" them, whether their visual image of this event is primary (the believer at first hand) or secondary (the believer at second hand).
- Still unselfconscious in Velleman's sense.

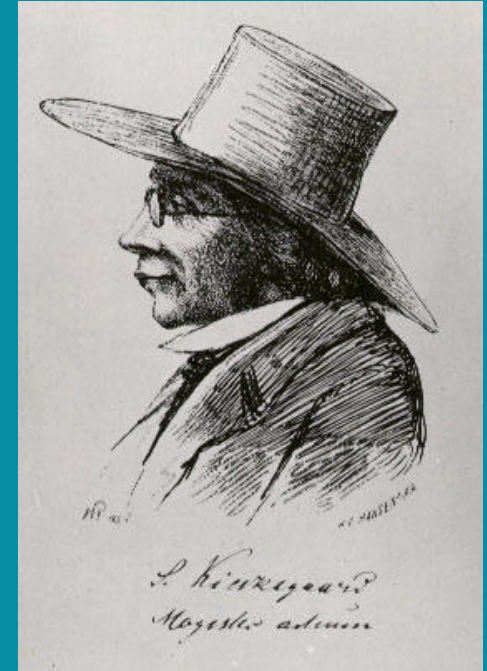


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CONTEMPORANEITY

Features

- The historically contemporary can *fail* to become phenomenally contemporary with such an event, so this property of phenomenal contemporaneity cannot be a function of the sensory input or visual constitution of the experience. It has to be something phenomenal, but not sensory, that attends the image .



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CONTEMPORANEITY

Features

- Soteriological *urgency*: the visualised situation implicitly speaks to us personally and makes demands of us.

“The qualification that is lacking – which is the qualification of truth (as inwardness) and of all religiousness is – **for you**. The past is not actuality – for me. Only the contemporary is actuality for me. That with which you are living simultaneously is actuality – for you. Thus every human being is able to become contemporary only with the time in which he is living – and then with one more, with Christ’s life upon earth, for Christ’s life upon earth, the sacred history, stands alone by itself, outside history” (Kierkegaard 1991: 64/2008: 76).



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MEMORY VS RECOLLECTION

Stages on Life's Way

Memory (*hukommelse*)

- a mere deliverer of information, an “indiscriminate” faculty that provides “a mass of details” (SLW, 14/SKS 6, 21) which do not necessarily have any inherent meaning or interconnection.
- Memory is “immediate and is assisted immediately” while recollection can only be assisted “reflectively” (SLW, 12/SKS 6, 20).

Recollection (*erindring*)

- Synthesized memories in a way that gives it “ideality”
- “strenuous and conscientious in a way completely different from indiscriminate memory.” (SLW, 10/SKS 6, 18).
- Afham tells us that many memoirs have no doubt been written that are products of memory but contain no recollection (SLW, 11/SKS 6, 19)



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CONTEMPORANEITY

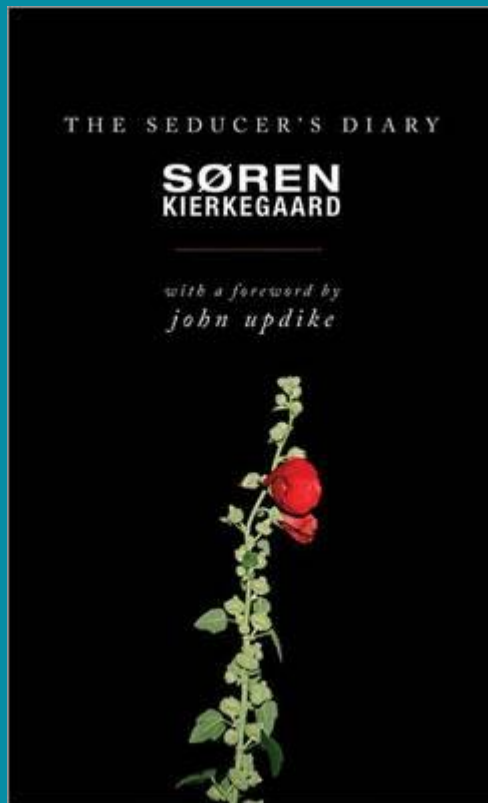
Responsibility

- Links memory to a sense that the actual subject is *responsible for* the notional subject.



CONTEMPORANEITY

Responsibility



- Not always a feature of episodic memory however: Johannes the Seducer in *Either/Or* can't reproduce the 'element of contemporaneity' in memory (Kierkegaard 1987:339/1997a: 387)
- So not every memory, for Kierkegaard, is reflexive...

ASSESSING THIS APPROACH

- May help in dealing with puzzles about the reflexivity of “observer memories,” where we visualise ourselves as an object *within* the visual field rather than being merely implied by its perspectival organization (Nigro and Neisser 1983; Robinson and Swanson 1993; Mclsaac and Eich 2002; Deebus 2007, pp. 198-202). If I visually remember an event with the subjective *phenomenal* property of being personally responsible for it (whatever the source and scope of that responsibility), it does not matter whether the physical perspective from which the event is presented as having been recorded is one that could have been physically available to me or not. Moreover, we can imaginatively experience past actions we have no recollection of (due to age, amnesia, intoxication etc.) as being the actions of selves we are on genuinely first-personal terms with, precisely because we see them as actions we are involved in and answerable for.



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ASSESSING THIS APPROACH

- Allows for the gap that is sometimes experienced between the causal and phenomenal accessibility of our memories and projected futures; an account such as Velleman's will struggle with cases where perspectival access is present but egocentric concern fails to hold.
- Also makes affective identification not merely contingent (Strawson) or psychologically desirable (Schechtman) but normative.
- Also posits the *same* property as making memory and anticipation reflexive (Velleman has to tell a different story about anticipation)
- But only as good as its phenomenology is compelling.
- Need to determine whether this approach can stand independently of religions commitments.
- Could not serve as a basis for a theory of personal identity without some external criterion of what we are in fact responsible for.



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