

## Handke's *Kaspar*, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, and the successful representation of alienation

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The prologue to Peter Handke's play *Kaspar* begins with these words:

The play *Kaspar* does not show how IT REALLY IS or REALLY WAS with Kaspar Hauser. It shows what is POSSIBLE with someone. It shows how someone can be made to speak through speaking. The play could also be called *speech torture*.<sup>1</sup>

The prologue concludes with this remark: "(While the audience comes in and as they wait for the play to begin, this text might be read softly over the microphones, and repeated over and over" [K61]). Accordingly, the next sentences would be, again, the first sentences of the introduction: "The play *Kaspar* does not show how IT REALLY IS or REALLY WAS with Kaspar Hauser. . . . The play could also be called *speech torture*." The prologue continues by providing a detailed description of the staging devices to be employed in the performance, to be used "to formalize this torture." Among the devices will be voices that address the protagonist, voices whose "manner of speaking should be that of voices which in reality have a technical medium interposed between themselves and the listeners" (telephones, bullhorns, records, microphones [K59]). We are also told that "the audience does not see the stage as a representation of a room that exists somewhere . . . the stage represents the stage" (K60). The objects on the stage are to appear theatrical, to be "instantly recognizable as props." The objects "have no history." The spectators, moreover, are not to be able, from what is there, to "imagine that, before they came in and saw the stage, some tale had already taken place on it," nor to "be in a position to imagine that there [will be] a sequel to [some] story." They are to recognize that they "will not experience a story but watch a theatrical event" (K60).

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Embedded in this prologue are several interrelated ideas about the nature of theatrical representation and its relevance to our lives. Also hinted at there is a certain kind of closeness between the project being carried out in *Kaspar* and the philosophical theory of meaning to be found in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.<sup>2</sup> A connection between Handke and Wittgenstein is often noted. But to my knowledge no one has attempted to investigate the theory of meaning in the *Tractatus* with a view to assessing how much of the aims, structure, and thematics of *Kaspar* can thereby be illuminated.<sup>3</sup> I will argue that reading *Kaspar* in light of the *Tractatus* provides a way both to articulate Handke's aims in the piece and to show how its structure achieves the realization of those aims. I will also argue that an understanding of the ways in which the Tractarian theory of meaning is inadequate will provide us with a way of measuring that achievement of those aims as an "achievement." In particular, I will argue that the limitations Handke places on theatrical representation in *Kaspar*, limitations shared by the Tractarian theory of meaning, prevent Handke from examining some of the most important features of that "alienation from language" that he wished to explore in the play.

### I: Handke's theatrical intentions, and the problems of *Kaspar*

The voices that are to speak to Kaspar in the play are to sound as though there were a "technical medium interposed" between them and "the listeners." We will want to discuss the implications of the "technical medium" being "interposed;" but notice first that it is "voices" that speak and "listeners" that hear this speaking—it is not "characters in a play." There are, in a sense, *no* characters in *Kaspar*. The play "does not show how it . . . really was with Kaspar Hauser . . . it shows how it is possible with *someone*" (K59). This will be a very abstract someone; for, like his historical namesake, the figure in the play has no history.<sup>4</sup> Connected to this is the idea that the objects are to be "immediately recognizable as props . . . they are play objects . . . they [too] have no history" (K60). These elements, we are told, are to enable the players "to formalize" the possibility we are about to be shown (K59)—they are also to prevent us from imagining we are about to "experience a story" and to alert us that we are, instead, going "to watch a theatrical event" (K60). What does Handke have in mind here that is characteristic of a "theatrical event"?

Within a month of the first performance of *Kaspar* Handke published a brief critical article that sheds light on the intentions expressed in the prologue to *Kaspar*.<sup>5</sup> In the article Handke focuses in on what he calls "the fatal limitations of the scope of the performance and of its relevance," claiming that "the theatre's

sphere of relevance is determined by the extent that everything that is serious, important, unequivocal, conclusive outside the theater becomes *play*."<sup>6</sup> Here Handke is setting up a distinction between the world outside the theater—where there are serious things going on—and the events inside the theater—where everything is transformed into ‘play.’ This point becomes the basis of his criticism of Brecht, whose plays not only reveal contradictions within the ways we think but also offer solutions to the conditions that produce such conflicted thinking. Handke argues that solutions offered in Brecht’s theatrical presentations happen “purely as a matter of form, a play.”<sup>7</sup> As such they are solutions only in a play. At this point what drives the argument is the connection Handke makes between “play” and “form.” “The theatre formalizes every movement, every insignificant detail, every word, every silence; it is no good at all when it comes to suggesting solutions, at most it is good for playing with contradictions.”<sup>8</sup>

So far, the argument appears to be this:

(a) Everything that is presented in the theater is formalized and therefore becomes play, a play of forms, play with form, play upon form.

Therefore:

(b) Just insofar as theater attempts to represent events outside the theater, it is a falsification both of the reality it formally represents and of the formal structures of theater within which the representation takes place.

When this argument is applied to the instance of Brechtian theatrical practice, we can only further conclude:

(c) Attempts, like Brecht’s, to bring important issues into the theater by means of the representation in theatrical performances of conditions and solutions to conditions outside the theater have been useful but, in the end, prove seriously misguided.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, Handke proposes an alternative form of theater.

What it could be good for (and has previously been good for) is an area of play for the creation of the spectator’s innermost, hitherto undiscovered areas of play, as a means by which the individual’s awareness becomes not broader but more precise, as a means of

becoming sensitive, of becoming susceptible, of reacting, as a means of coming into the world.<sup>10</sup>

When doing this, Handke claims, "the theatre is not then portraying the world. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

To attempt to achieve what theater is good for would seem to require creating a non-representational theater, an analogy perhaps with non-figurative painting. What this will look like is already suggested and illustrated by Handke in the *Sprechstücke* that were written and performed in 1965-66.<sup>12</sup> Handke calls these "spectacles without pictures" that "give no picture of the world." They are pieces for the theater "inasmuch as they employ natural forms of expression found in reality . . . such expressions as are natural in real speech . . . speech forms that are uttered *orally* in real life" that *therefore* "need . . . at least *one* person who listens."<sup>13</sup> Notice that here, as in *Kaspar*, there are no characters in the usual sense, only listeners. Nor will the *Sprechstücke* have any action, "since every action on stage would only be a picture of another action" and, as such, would be a formalization—a falsification—of both the action pictured and the formal play of theater as well. Surely Handke is correct here if he thinks that these are interconnected phenomena. For, to describe someone's action, or to describe someone as acting in a certain manner, requires reference to that person's dispositions and intentions.<sup>14</sup> Inasmuch as dispositions and intentions are not momentary, but relatively enduring, features of a personality, their description in turn must refer to the person in a temporal context of interaction with others—in short, in a story. Absent characters, actions, and stories, what is left is . . . words: words that "give no picture of the world . . . that don't point at the world as something lying outside the words but to the world in the words themselves . . . [that] give no picture of the world but a concept of it."<sup>15</sup>

In sum, in order to create a theater that does not confuse the reality outside the theater and the transformation into play of everything inside the theater, Handke urges us to abjure the standard means of theatrical representation: characters, stories, and referential uses of language that goes along with representing people in the context of their stories. But Handke complicates matters considerably in moving from the *Sprechstücke* to *Kaspar*. In the former he clearly attempts a theater that eschews narrative representation. In *Kaspar*, however, there is a series of events that looks sufficiently plotted that it has tempted most commentators to present their synopses of the play in the form of an abstract story. Along with the appearance of plotting comes, inevitably, the appearance of a character—there is, after all, a protagonist. The protagonist has a gender and a name. He has a name, moreover, that has historical and theatrical antecedents that raise expectations concerning his behavior, some part of the course of a life. So it can seem that all of the standard means of theatrical

representation so successfully avoided in the *Sprechstücke* actually exist in *Kaspar* despite the explicit statements in the Prologue to the contrary.<sup>16</sup>

In section IV I will argue that the examination of *Kaspar* in light of the *Tractatus* will enable us to see how *Kaspar* can have both the appearance and the effect of a plotted structure without containing character, real action, or an underlying narrative.<sup>17</sup> To make that case I must first lay down an account of the sequence of events in *Kaspar* and provide a precis of Wittgenstein's project in the *Tractatus* and of its failure.

## II: A sequence of events in *Kaspar*

When one reads *Kaspar* it is obvious that the piece has sixty-five numbered sections. [One striking resemblance between the written texts of *Kaspar* and the *Tractatus* is the fact that they both appear in the form of numbered divisions.] But the numbered divisions in *Kaspar* are not connected in any obvious way to the text as a theater-script. For that purpose, we need to note the indications in the text for changes in the stage-lighting. This gives us the divisions of the piece as experienced by an audience: following the Prologue, during which the stage lights are up, there are five scenes followed by a set of sixteen very short "blackout scenes;" then a sixth scene followed in turns by an intermission and two final scenes.<sup>18</sup>

The first scene begins with some activity behind the back curtain indicating that someone is trying to get through. After considerable effort *Kaspar* appears. He stands still for a moment, long enough for the audience to see he is wearing a mask expressing astonishment and confusion. (That he is wearing a mask is not to be immediately apparent.) He moves. Like his theatrical namesake, the puppet in *Punch and Judy*, he is clumsy, out of control. After several perilous moments, he succeeds in falling. After a few moments, he utters the sentence "I want to be a person like somebody else was once." He repeats it several times—until it is clear to the audience that he does not understand it.<sup>19</sup> In the next sequence of movements, *Kaspar* will (1) utter his sentence in tones that suggest commands, questions, expressions of happiness, relief, and so on, (2) rise, walk clumsily about knocking into the randomly placed bits of furniture, and address each with his sentence, and (3) finally, by accident, manage to open the doors of a large wardrobe. At this point the audience hears voices from various sides speaking in short paragraphs which are punctuated by *Kaspar* uttering his sentence. These voices are called the "Prompters."

In the next four scenes *Kaspar*, by turns, has his sentence "exorcised,"<sup>20</sup> is made to speak the ordered speech of his Prompters, assesses his present abilities

as the power to order objects, expresses the hope of being able now to say important things with the sentences at his disposal, affirms himself,<sup>21</sup> is undermined by the prompters, threatened. The Prompters tell him he can become useful, that "even if there are no limits, [he] can draw them," that he can become orderly and quiet—and once again the effect is a threat. In the brightest light the prompters say, "You have been cracked open." It gets dark. After a moment they say, "You become sensitive to dirt" (K 103).

In the first nine of the sixteen short "blackouts," several "other Kaspars" appear. They are dressed like Kaspar 1, and are also wearing masks expressing astonishment. The Kaspars mime various things—movements, pains, sounds, the return of things to an order—upon cue from the prompters. (None of the Kaspars relate to each other in any obvious way.) In the remainder, Kaspar 1 engages in various tasks (opening one hand with the other against resistance only to reveal an empty hand, chasing himself around a bit, as though to catch himself, closing the wardrobe doors); each task or image is punctuated by darkness. [It is noteworthy that the Prompters never appear again.]

The next scene opens with Kaspar in bright light assuming various poses. He then turns to the audience and declares himself healthy, strong, conscientious, honest, frugal, a model citizen . . . all this, because he has command of speech. He turns to leave, starts back, repeats the leaving and starting back, repeats it again: and then leaves rapidly. Once he is gone the wardrobe doors slowly swing open.

During the intermission there are voices piped over loud speakers into the lobby, and even into the street outside. These sentences are marked simultaneously by precise grammatical regularity and a lack of actual grammatical intelligibility. The effect, perhaps the theme, of these sentences is violence.

Following this intermission Kaspar re-enters confidently upon a stage already populated by the other Kaspars. He begins the first of several attempts to describe his education into speech in honorific terms. But the other Kaspars rise and advance on him making increasingly disruptive noises. Kaspar is again, as he was when his original sentence was exorcised, reduced to fragmented speech.

In the final brief scene Kaspar stands burdened by the impossibility of his situation and its inescapability—"I cannot rid myself of myself anymore." He is reduced to grotesque comparisons: "candles and bloodsuckers: ice and mosquitoes: horses and puss." The play ends with Kaspar repeating with phrase, "Goats and monkeys" (the phrase of Othello's despair over human rapacity). With each repetition the curtain jerks towards the center where the Kaspars are standing, finally knocking them down. The play is over.

### III: The argument and the failure of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*

The project, as Wittgenstein described it, is this:

to set a limit to thought, or rather—not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to set a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought). It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be set, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense.<sup>22</sup>

This project is clearly in the Kantian tradition, not only in its attempt to describe the phenomena of thought and language "only from within language" but also because it construes the primary function of language to be the representation of thoughts. These points are also related: the way Wittgenstein understood the representation of thought in language determined how the limits to thought and language were to be scribed.

In this context we encounter Wittgenstein's famous "picture theory" of meaning: the first decisive move in Wittgenstein's account of representation is to treat all forms of representation as pictorial in character and logic.<sup>23</sup> The second is to recognize that pictures are, in a certain sense, not pictures of objects at all but of situations (arrangements of objects, if you like). This pair of ideas leads to the notion that it is not names but sentences that are basic to linguistic meaning. "We picture facts to ourselves" (TLP, 2.1). But, "situations can be described but not *given names*. (Names are like points; propositions like arrows—they have sense" [TLP, 3.144]). So, "only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have a meaning" (TLP, 3.3).

This connection between pictures and propositions—sentences that are used to describe and explain the world—needs further explanation. That explanation in turn will make prominent the idea that becomes central to the setting of limits to the sayable: the idea of "logical form." What Wittgenstein had in mind by the expression, "proposition," can be understood by considering the fact that the same content can be asserted in the active and the passive voice: the proposition, we may say, is that which is shared by the two expressions of the proposition. The picture theory helps not only to clarify but also to extend this point. In a picture, what might be called the 'elements' of the picture correspond to objects; and they represent those objects. But what is crucial is that "what constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to each other in a determinate way" (TLP, 2.14) and not that they are produced in a particular way. The emphasis on the relation of

elements in a picture over the way the elements are produced is explained in the following remark: "the fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way" (TLP, 2.15). From this we also can see how a picture can be said to be true or false—it depends upon whether the possible situation it represents actually obtains. Just so, Wittgenstein held, "what constitutes a propositional sign is that in it its elements (the words) stand in a determinate relation to one another" (TLP, 3.14). And, "a proposition is a picture of reality . . . [it] is a model of reality as we imagine [think of] it"<sup>24</sup> (TLP, 4.01).

From the foregoing now emerges the idea of "logical form." With respect to pictures, Wittgenstein explained the point in this way: the connection of the elements of a picture he calls its "structure;" and the *possibility* of such structure he calls "the pictorial form of the picture." Connecting these terms with the remarks we covered earlier produces the idea that "pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture" (TLP, 2.15-.151). Corresponding to the pictorial form of a picture is the logical form of a proposition. Like pictorial form, logical form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the way the proposition represents them.

What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it—correctly or incorrectly—in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality. (TLP, 2.18)

The logical form of a proposition, then, is that feature of the proposition that "mirrors" the possibilities of states of affairs in the world, one of which possibilities is asserted to obtain by the particular proposition at hand.

The importance for the Tractarian theory of the ideas of pictorial and logical form cannot be over-stressed. On the one hand they are central to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as the study of the possible. On the other they are the pivotal notions in the idea of a limit to what can be said. Once again, consider pictures first. We have said that what a picture "depicts" is a situation while, in so doing, it also "displays" the possibility that things are related in the manner depicted. What Wittgenstein notices here is that there is a fundamental difference between depiction and display. The argument is laid out as follows:

A picture can depict any reality whose form it has. A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a coloured one anything coloured, etc. A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it. A picture represents its subject from a position outside it. (Its standpoint is its representational form.) That is why a picture represents its



subject correctly or incorrectly. A picture cannot, however, place itself outside its representational form. (TLP, 2.171-.174)

Thus, like pictorial form, the logical form of a proposition *displays* the form of the world—that is, its possibilities—whereas the proposition itself *asserts* that a particular situation obtains. And, like the pictorial form of the picture that cannot be depicted but only displayed, the logical form of a proposition is something that can not be asserted (said) but only displayed (shown). "It shows itself" in the proposition.

The attempt to say that which can only be shown will result in nonsense.

The classic instances of philosophical nonsense will arise, on this view, from attempts to frame propositions that describe or explain the connections between the logical form of propositions and the form of the world. A notable case of such nonsense will of course be much of the *Tractatus* itself:

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) (TLP, 6.54)

But nearly the entire metaphysical tradition in Western philosophy will fall into the category of nonsense as well. The age-old ontological categories of substance and accident (or, object and property, to use a more current philosophical jargon) will be regarded as nonsensical precisely because they derive from an attempt to say what the most general features of the world must be in order for our understanding of the world to be what it is. The generation of these categories in philosophy can be thought of as the result of asserting of the world that it must correspond to the subject-predicate construction of our grammar. Against the intelligibility of the traditional "ontological categories" Wittgenstein held that the form of the world cannot be said; it must (can only) be shown.

It is now well-documented that in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was not primarily concerned with this kind of nonsense—metaphysical nonsense—as the Vienna Circle positivists and their followers mistakenly believed.<sup>25</sup> The actual focus of his concerns was on issues the expression of which in propositional form would also result in nonsense but which have to do with the most important things in life: the sense of the world, ethics, aesthetics, the mystical. Here we have a second limit to the sayable or, perhaps, a second aspect of the limit just described. In any case, the last passages of the *Tractatus* are taken up with the following argument: since all propositions are concerned only with what is true

or false, "all propositions are of equal value" (TLP, 6.4). But this just means that, *qua* proposition, no proposition can express anything of value. Once again, but with a fundamental difference, we arrive at something that cannot be said and must be shown. The difference is, of course, that there is a role for language to play in the displaying of value. The relevant influences here are Kierkegaard (who, like Wittgenstein, believed that the most valuable matters could be discussed but only indirectly, through the medium of stories that had a capacity for revelation) and Tolstoy (whose short stories Wittgenstein took to be especially important in his own life).

Related to these limits (or aspects of the limit) to the sayable is a third, that of what Wittgenstein called "the metaphysical subject." We can make this out first, once again, as a feature of pictures. Just as the pictorial form of a picture cannot be depicted but only displayed by the picture, so also the one who pictures facts to herself is not depicted *within* the picture. Wittgenstein uses the eye and the visual field to illustrate the point.

. . . nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye . . . For the form of the visual field is surely not like this



(TLP, 5.633-5.6331)

It is in this connection that Wittgenstein makes the famous remarks that "what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*" and that "the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my world*" (TLP, 5.62). What is usually not remembered when these lines are quoted is that Wittgenstein's position does not entail that we cannot 'say' anything about human beings. It is only for the "metaphysical subject" that the above statements hold:

There really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world'. The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world—not a part of it. (TLP, 5.641)

The distinction Wittgenstein draws here owes something to the Kantian distinction between the empirical subject and the subject required for the thematic unity of apperception. Indeed they perform similar functions in the structures of their respective theories.<sup>26</sup>

Before turning to Handke's use of the Tractarian theory that I have just sketched, we need to grasp two further facts about the Tractarian view of language. The first fact is that the *Tractatus* gives no account of the acquisition of language, of how language (understood in Tractarian terms) could be learned. The second fact is that, when one does try to extract an account of language learning from the *Tractatus*, its view of meaning begins to unravel. This point was expressed by Wittgenstein in his later work, most notably in the *Philosophical Investigations*, by way of an argument that the picture theory of meaning is mistaken because it has the implication that all languages are second languages. As we will see, this point appears to be assumed and exploited by Handke—not as an argument against the Tractarian theory of meaning but as a pretext for and a form of play.

To see why the Tractarian view is committed to construing any language as a second language, consider how one is to be taught the meaning of any stretch of sound. *Kaspar* suggests one alternative to us: after losing his sentence, Kaspar simply starts to repeat bits of the Prompters' sentences until he can do it himself without prompting. But how is it that we know (and, more importantly, that he knows) he is getting it right? We know because we see him come to use the word "table," for example, in one of the ways already familiar to us. But this does not explain how *he* is to know. In fact this is left almost completely untreated in the play; and that gap itself contributes significantly to the feeling that meaning assignments are arbitrary and therefore under the control of the Prompters. However, it is also significant that the primary way such words are employed in the play is in reference to objects presented to us. This is that use of words I have just mentioned as "one of the ways familiar to us." And this is entirely consistent with the Tractarian picture of meaning in which the criterion for establishing meaning could only be stipulative ostension of objects named within situations asserted to obtain.

But ostension is clearly not a self-certifying procedure. As Wittgenstein showed in the *Philosophical Investigations*, ostension itself requires something like prior understanding of the kind of feature that is being pointed to.<sup>27</sup> If I point to a book and say "book," how is the child to know that it is the object itself, and not its color, size, or shape to which I am pointing? Unless she has the appropriate preparation ostension simply cannot succeed. The necessary preparation includes familiarity not only with kinds of features but also with pointing gestures themselves. This can be seen by considering the question,

"When I point, how is she to know to follow out the line of my index finger, and not that of my thumb?" This preparation is, in effect, a training into the possession or mastery of certain behavior that is already linguistic or, at least, proto-linguistic. It shares the kind of intentionality one finds in verbal expressions of joy, of pain, of curiosity, and so on. Ostension, in sum, can only succeed for people who already possess some (at least rudimentary) language (or linguistic behavior). This is why ostension is one effective technique employed in teaching a second language. But the important upshot in the present context is that the picture theory of meaning is committed to presenting *all* language-learning as the result of ostension; and, since ostension already presupposes some linguistic behavior, the view we are considering must also hold that all language is second language.

But, of course, it is not.

#### IV: A construction of Handke's achievement in *Kaspar*

We are now in a position to begin sketching out how the *Tractatus* provides Handke the material with which he plays in *Kaspar*. Central to the design of the *Tractatus* is Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as the study of what is possible—that is, of what makes meaning possible and of the consequences of the occurrence of meaning within just those possibilities.

A particular mode of signifying may be unimportant but it is always important that it is a *possible* mode of signifying. And that is generally so in philosophy: again and again the individual case turns out to be unimportant, but the possibility of each individual case discloses something about the essence of the world. (TLP, 3.3421)

Hence, for Wittgenstein, philosophy is the study of form: for, "form is the possibility of structure" (TLP, 2.033). One suggestion worth making immediately is that Handke could bring the *Tractatus* into the theater by associating the notion of "play" with that of the "investigation of the possible." But it will also be remembered that Handke is concerned, more specifically, with plays of contradictions. This raises an interesting question: what if one were to try to present the Tractarian view of meaning and simultaneously confront it with its own implied but self-refuting view of language learning?

It is immediately evident that the teaching of even a second language must be distorted in such a presentation. In ordinary second-language learning (and quite apart from the special issue of catching on to idiomatic expressions) there must be a fairly wide range of contact between the memorized vocabulary and

grammar and the lived circumstances in which the language is used. And that range of contact must be far wider than mere ostensive teaching can provide. This is what I meant earlier when I wrote that ostension is *one* effective technique for teaching a second language. The point here is that, in a theory of meaning in which the only effective teaching technique is ostension, not only is all language second language but also all teaching is insistence, coercion. Where there is no interrelation between linguistic, pre-linguistic and non-linguistic intention and behavior to be invoked and relied upon in the teaching, the teacher can only point and threaten until the learner repeats. This is precisely the method of the Prompters in *Kaspar*. It is also the reason Kaspar, just at the point of recognition in the final sequence, remarks, "Already with my first sentence I was trapped." It too was implanted by force.

It cannot have been otherwise. Consider that first sentence: "I want to be a person like somebody else was once." Kaspar's first utterance of the sentence has him repeat it several times until it becomes clear to the audience that he does not understand it. This is followed immediately by the moment when he utters the sentence as though doing various things with it: giving a command, asking a question, expressing relief. This, in turn, is followed by a passage in which Kaspar tries out various encounters with objects on the stage while the Prompters extol the virtues of his sentence:

"Already you have a sentence with which you can make yourself noticeable . . . You can explain to yourself how it goes with you . . . You have a sentence with which you can bring order into every disorder . . ." (K, 67 & 69)

There is some kind of development here—all of it occurring before he has his sentence "exorcised." It appears we are to see Kaspar as being stripped of a language, small but his own, when the Prompters set to work at undermining him. But to see him as possessing language prior to the exorcism we must assume it too is a second language. In the first moment, there is no difference between Kaspar's behavior and that of a parrot—it is not even clear that we should describe him as "speaking." In the second, his behavior is clearly that of a language-user—but there is no wider behavioral context provided for any of the things Kaspar "does" with his sentence that would make that particular sentence intelligible *as* a command, a question, or an expression of any feeling whatever. This is not to say that one just couldn't intelligibly use that sentence to issue a command, ask a question, express fear, or whatever. But it should remind us that Handke intends for nothing to be presented to the audience except the utterance of the sentence in the intonations characteristic of commands, questions, and so

forth. Since intonation alone is insufficient for an utterance actually to be a command, a question, or what have you, we are here being asked to see Kaspar as already linguistically competent and trying out this sentence as a new, second, language—one that was forced upon him just before he came onstage, perhaps, and with which he therefore is at the outset not sufficiently familiar to achieve anything.

Looking at *Kaspar* as a play in which the Tractarian theory of meaning is both embodied and confronted with its own implied view of language-learning takes us a considerable distance towards explaining how the sense of alienation from one's language and oneself is induced in the play. In this "play of contradictions" all teaching is coercive insistence and one's language is never one's own. This pairing of coercion and a kind of dispossession is presented graphically in the play's most striking images: the visual image of the puppet-like Kaspar with the frozen mask that at first does not appear to be a mask, and the auditory image of the Prompter's voices sounding as though they were produced by the use of "technical media." The face of the mask is, at once, all there is to see and never Kaspar's own. And the face, because it is a mask with a predetermined expression, is imposed heteronomously. The use of "technical media" for the presentation of the Prompters' voices flows from the picture theory of meaning itself—where our language is explained as a kind of disembodied notation interposed between our selves and the world. The sense of language as always a second language is parlayed in *Kaspar* into a picture of alienation—an inescapable alienation: with our first utterances we are already trapped.

This way of reading *Kaspar* also illuminates the connections among the sense of alienation from one's language and oneself (just described), the absence of characters, and the sense that while there is no history here there is a kind of plot to the events in the play. We can see how this reading helps us get a handle on these interrelated issues by first asking "Who are the other Kaspars?" Whatever the answer(s) might be to that question, there are some answers that cannot be given: e.g., his family. Indeed we can almost exclude in advance any answer that makes out the other Kaspars as capable of any *personal* relationship to Kaspar 1, that is, any relationship in which the problem could arise of their being genuine (enemies, lovers, friends). Just think how difficult it would be—and how much at odds with the explicit directions given in the script—even to attempt a presentation of them as casual acquaintances. The importance of this lies in its reminding us that there is nothing in the play—just as there is nothing in the *Tractatus*—to suggest how we employ language in anything like an everyday relationship, let alone in a relationship to which we might (correctly or incorrectly) attach some weight, some value. Had there been, attention would

have been drawn to situations in which relationships were begun, discovered, disturbed, destroyed, made firm or tenuous, or the like. Lacking this, there is nothing in the play—just as there is nothing in the *Tractatus*—that is anything like any actual situation where our language may, as we may, have life.

I do not, in the foregoing, intend to rule out alternative interpretations of the other Kaspars. They might just be Kaspar, either as alter-egos or pieces of a fragmented self; they might be emblems of a kind of stultifying sameness that all characters in all plays have; they might be the Prompters, now, so to speak, internalized; or what have you. Nor do I think that the most interesting interpretation of the Kaspars is to be laid out in terms of their being separate individuals. But, *if* we try to construe them as individuals, their very individuality becomes the least interesting thing about them, they function in ways other than the ones for which individuating traits are important, and the language of interchange between people who interact with each other on the basis of even minimal interest in human similarities and differences is wholly lacking in the play.

What is true of the "other Kaspars" is also true of Kaspar. These are not human beings, not human bodies, not human souls with which psychology might be concerned—they are, if anything, "the metaphysical subject"—and, in this play, that subject is very much in trouble. Playing back the idea that all language is second language now puts into question the claim that "the world is my world" that "this is manifest in the fact that the limits of my language (of that language which I alone understand) mean the limits of my world." The subject that is supposed to author pictures of the world now finds—at the less than benign insistence of the Prompters—that he has no authorship here. Furthermore, what is true of Kaspar is also true of the Prompters—hence, once again, the presentation of their voices as though "technical media" interposed between *them* and the world.

The absence of stories in the play is now to be expected. Earlier I remarked that if we were to take any of these figures as human beings—as people whom, for example, one might care for, dislike, find interesting, boring, amusing—there would have to have been the kind of showing in the play of something of the life of these figures. To show that is to tell a story. But just insofar as these figures are all aspects of the "metaphysical subject" no story about them is possible. We are left then with a sequence of events—but not a story.

We might have anticipated this from what we already understood of the *Tractatus*. Telling a story is a particular way of relating events. Plotting is involved. To plot is to shape the telling of the events in such a way that they are (in the main) comprehensible to some community.<sup>28</sup> What makes events comprehensible to us, and what a story provides that a spare listing of the events

does not, is a sense of why they happen in a particular order, a sense of cause and effect, and especially a sense of intentionality. The Tractarian picture theory of meaning has been shown to be completely incapable of explaining even the simplest sort of causal connections.<sup>29</sup> For, while a picture can depict something that is the case (and so may illustrate a causal law), without appeal to that which is *not* in the picture it cannot show why what is the case is so; and, so, a picture cannot so much as *state* causal laws. Nor is the Tractarian theory rescued on this point by possibilities of sequences of pictures. Each picture represents an "atomic fact," as it were. But explanation, one wants to say, happens 'between' the pictures. Offering an explanation consists of saying that one fact occurs because or in consequence of the other surrounding facts. Listing those facts provides the material with which an explanation might be formulated, but not the explanation itself. It follows, by the same reasoning, that the Tractarian account is utterly devoid of the resources necessary for accounting for events that are connected by human intention and agency. On this reading of *Kaspar* (in which the Tractarian theory of meaning is contradicted by its own implied theory of language acquisition), it is clear now how the alienation from language is connected to the absence of character and how that, in turn, is connected to the absence of a story in *Kaspar*. It is clear, in short, how Handke has been successful in avoiding narrative representation.

Nevertheless there is still much in *Kaspar* that suggests a story, a plot. One thing that makes this suggestion is that there are several recognizable plot elements, or 'plot-devices,' in the play. There is, for example, at least one "recognition scene" (albeit disrupted).<sup>30</sup> Of course, by itself, the presence of one or more such scenes does not guarantee the presence of a "plot," if by that we mean "a structured underlying story." Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* is famous both for being genuinely plotless and containing a hilarious inverted and parodic recognition scene. What shows that *The Bald Soprano* is plotless, I think, is the fact that the order of its scenes could be completely rearranged without loss of comprehension (although there might be some loss of effect). In contrast, *Kaspar* is not a spare sequence of unrelated pictures whose order could be so reversed or rearranged.<sup>31</sup> Indeed if one follows the sequence of events as determined by the lighting directions the sequence has a rhythmic structure that carries the feel of a fairly standard plot development: introduction of characters, exposition of the situation, conflict, rising action, climax, denouement.

It would be a mistake to conclude from this that *Kaspar* must, after all, contain an underlying narrative. Nor should we conclude that there is such a narrative but that Handke fails to make it (or allow it to) hang together. The presence of a pattern of plot development no more automatically entails that there is a plotted story afoot than does the presence of isolated individual plot-devices.



A piece of music can have the same feel of patterned development; but we would not necessarily conclude that, upon listening, we had heard a story related in which event was related to event by some character's intentions.<sup>32</sup> What is required, more than this, for a setting forth of some events to be a plotting of a story is reference to the failed or realized intentions of human beings (or things that can be made to act like them) that connects events in the manner we recognize as narrative. But it is the representation of just precisely such intentions that Handke successfully avoids throughout *Kaspar*. What we have at the level of structure is parallel to what we have seen at the level of events. Just as Kaspar does not act but only represents the possibility of actions, so the whole play presents a patterned sequence of events that is not a plotted story but an empty representation of the possibility of plots. Handke has been playing with "the investigation of the possible" throughout the play.

#### VI: Measuring Handke's achievement

So far, I have argued that Handke has succeeded in realizing his intentions in *Kaspar*, both those discovered in the play itself and those stated elsewhere. This conclusion has been attained by locating what Handke, in constructing the thematics of *Kaspar*, uses from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and by analyzing how he uses it. But I also think that a reconsideration of the *Tractatus* can both show us how Handke has succeeded in what he set out to achieve and also provide a means by which we can measure that as an "achievement." In particular it can allow us a way to discover what sort of liabilities, if any, might attach to adopting a set of themes and figures that are suggested by the structure and program of the *Tractatus*.

The place to look for those liabilities is in the growing body of literature that documents and analyzes the ways in which people may lose, or in some cases never gain, the ability to articulate the important facts in and about their lives. Especially important to this task is that area of the literature that explores the possibility that a commitment to a particular philosophical theory might similarly disable us. Most of these explorations have focused on Logical Positivism and its legacy.<sup>33</sup> This is convenient here because the theory of language with which the Vienna Circle and other Logical Positivists were working is precisely that theory substantially worked out by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. Their ends may have been different from his—and he may have seen an importance in the unsayable that they denied—but the mechanics of meaning arguably were the same. If there are things about our lives that the Tractarian theory actually prevents us from articulating, this will be important in providing a measure of Handke's achievement in *Kaspar*.

That depends, of course, on whether and how far Handke has bought into those aspects of the Tractarian theory that cause the impoverishment in question. For, clearly, Handke's turning of the theory on itself, the key strategy in *Kaspar*, does more than merely suggest Handke's own suspicions of the alienating character of the Tractarian theory. Nevertheless, in this conclusion I will sketch out three areas where the Tractarian theory—even in the criticized form of it we find in *Kaspar*—weakens Handke's ability to articulate important aspects of the alienation from language that he sets out to present in *Kaspar*.

*Alienation and failures of intention*

The first area I wish to survey concerns failures of intention. To be sure there is no explicit account of intentions and failures of intention in either the *Tractatus* or *Kaspar*. In both, however, that aspect of intention that is relevant to meaning can only be pictured as the intention to refer—to name. Correspondingly, failure of intention must be pictured as failure to secure reference. The relation between this picture and alienation is not hard to see. On the one hand there is an ancient perception of a connection between naming and dominion. And on the other, Handke's handling of the Tractarian theory, turning it back on itself, fairly easily produces the following argument:

- (a) If all language is second-language, all language-teaching is coercion.
- (b) If all language is second-language, language must be conceived as a technical medium interposed between thought and the world.
- (c) (In the Tractarian account) all language is second-language.

Therefore:

- (d) (In the Tractarian account) no expression of thought in language can be genuine, i.e., an authentic expression of the person whose thought is being expressed.

The premises here make it plain that the language I use can never be under my own control because it is always an external device under the control of those who teach the language. The expression of thought therefore is always mediated and distorted by issues of power. I am always alienated from my language. I can never name what I wish to name—that is, I can never give it a name that I control.

If we are attune to the difficulties besetting the Tractarian theory of meaning, we can readily see that this account, attractive as it might be, is at several levels both mistaken and inadequate for understanding alienated forms of failures of intention. At a technical level it can be noted that, although it is undeniable that power can be exercised over others by getting them to adopt our names for things, far greater power is brought into play by getting them to accept our *descriptions* of things and events. The Tractarian theory of meaning simply doesn't have the resources to trace either the real continuities or the discontinuities between names and descriptions. A more serious problem lies in the fact that the Tractarian picture of language *use* is entirely one-dimensional: on this picture language is entirely a fact-stating enterprise. But, as Wittgenstein was later to come to see, language is a labyrinth of different kinds of activities, it is a varied collection of forms of action that have non-trivial and varied connections (and disconnections) with our non-linguistic and pre-linguistic desires and intentions.<sup>34</sup> To describe our language requires describing our lives. It is easy to see that the range of intentions connected with what we mean to do with a given stretch of language is far richer than merely the intention to name some thing or refer to a set of facts.<sup>35</sup> And, as for those cases in which alienation is a matter of unrealized or unrealizable intentions, this too can take varied forms, not all of which are reducible to failure to fix one's own reference of the names one already has in hand. For example, one may consciously feel the need to describe something but not even have the relevant vocabulary within which to do so. It is noteworthy that a case of this kind is not helpfully thought of as a problem arising from language always being a second-language; here the problem might indeed be aided by the acquisition of something like a second language, viz., a new stretch of one's first language that is hitherto unknown.

### *Alienation as loss*

Those who are interested in understanding what is involved in alienation, including alienation from one's own language, ought to be concerned to explicate the fact that when one becomes conscious of that alienation this is experienced as loss. As early as 1844 Marx stresses this point by using the term "estrangement" for the phenomena.<sup>36</sup> What makes the picturing of language as second-language initially attractive as a figure for estrangement, and hence as a way of expressing the relevant kinds of loss, is precisely that second languages either never have or only after many years can come to have the feeling of intimacy one has with one's first language. But this feature actually gets denied in a theory and a picture that relies on a theory that takes *all* language to be second-language. The very contrast that could be used to explicate estrangement as the loss of a prior or a possible intimacy is itself lost.

A related issue concerns the ways in which an expression can be either "full" or "empty" of meaning for us.<sup>37</sup> Consider the expression, "Don't judge another until you've walked a while in her shoes." For most of us for whom this expression once seemed full of meaning and wisdom, the expression must now seem a little thin. We don't walk as much as we used to. So we don't see the world (our own or that of others) at a walking pace. We are simply less reflective in our daily lives. We do not have time for that. No doubt we may have a kind of nostalgic attachment to what we take to be the wisdom involved in the expression. But how are we to transmit that wisdom to our children? "Don't judge a person until you've driven home from school in her Honda Civic"? Once again it is noteworthy that the kinds of loss of meaning involved here take place within our first language. No representation in terms of a second language is either necessary or helpful in the explication of alienation of this sort.

#### *Alienation and false consciousness*

Classical accounts of alienation have held that those who are alienated but unaware of their alienation possess a kind of "false consciousness."<sup>38</sup> There are varied accounts of how in detail we are to understand this. Whatever it comes to it seems to involve people accepting, as if it were both accurate and satisfying, a set of beliefs about themselves and their roles and identities that is both inaccurate and disabling to them as real active human agents. Once again, where the alienation in question is from one's own language, the picture of language as second language is both an initially attractive figure but ultimately self-defeating in its analysis of the phenomena.

More important than this technical objection however is the fact that the kinds of beliefs involved in false consciousness cannot even be represented in a Tractarian theory of meaning. For they are not, or are not merely, beliefs about "what is the case" but about what is important and significant in life and about how our lives are connected to what is important and significant. Wittgenstein's theory explicitly holds that what is of value is not directly expressible. Similarly Handke's Kaspar is rendered incapable of expressing what is important, by language itself. For both, what is significant in life cannot be spoken. Handke's Kaspar can be taken to show us that, were that theory true, we should still resist the dictum that "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." But an account of the false consciousness that often accompanies alienation simply cannot be made out in these terms. False consciousness is not silence nor acquiescence in silence over the unutterable. Nor is overcoming false consciousness a matter of resisting silence. Both false consciousness and its overcoming presuppose the intelligibility—an ordinary everyday intelligibility—of expressions of what is important to us.

We must conclude therefore with a mixed assessment of *Kaspar*. No doubt it achieves the goals Handke set for himself with respect to the selection (and eschewal) of particular theatrical means. But, precisely because it buys into too much of the Tractarian theory in order to secure those selections, it must also be less effective at achieving the broader ideological goals in the service of which those selections of means were made.<sup>39</sup>

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## Notes

1. Peter Handke, *Kaspar and Other Plays*, trans. M. Roloff (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969) 59. References to this text will be made to 'K' plus page number—e.g., (K59).

2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuiness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961). The first German edition of the *Tractatus* was in *Annale der Naturphilosophie*, 1921. Compare the first sentences of *Kaspar* with the following:

3.3421 A particular mode of signifying may be unimportant but it is always important that it is a *possible* mode of signifying. And that is generally so in philosophy: again and again the individual case turns out to be unimportant, but the possibility of each individual case discloses something about the essence of the world.

References to the *Tractatus* will be in the form TLP plus the paragraph number; e.g., (TLP, 3.3421).

3. This is not made easier by the fact that Wittgenstein's work underwent something of a sea change in the 30s and 40s. Michael Hays, after remarking a connection between Handke and Wittgenstein writes, ". . . but it should be noted that the terms in [Handke's] discussion of the multiple sets of signifiers in the theater belong more to Saussure and Roland Barthes than they do to the *Philosophical Investigations*." Michael Hays, "Peter Handke and the End of the 'Modern'," *Modern Drama* 23.4 (1981): 349. This is correct, but misleading. In *Kaspar*, Handke relies upon the theory of meaning in the *Tractatus*, not on the withdrawal from theory in the *Investigations*. Yet, since the Tractarian theory utilizes the same intellectual resources as those upon which structural linguistics rest, Hays is not wrong in sensing the resonance between Handke's work and Saussure's. Finally, however, the *Philosophical Investigations* contains a telling set of criticisms of the Tractarian theory; and many of those criticisms will tell as decisively against Saussurean linguistics and its progeny as they do against the *Tractatus*. See sections III and IV, below.

4. Nicholas Hem, *Peter Handke* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1972) 58.

5. Peter Handke, "Brecht, Play, Theatre, Agitation," (first published in *Theater Heute*, April 1968), translated by N. Hem in *Theatre Quarterly* 1.4 (1971): 89-90. Reprinted in *Peter Handke: Prosa Gedichte Theaterstücke Horspiel Aufsätze* (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969).

6. 90, emphasis in the original.

7. 90.

8. 90.

9. It might be noted that (b), as it stands, does not follow from (a)—and in any case cannot follow from (a) alone. Nor is it obviously true that whenever anything serious is transformed into something playful, or given a playful representation, it is automatically "falsified." Satire, for example, achieves its truths precisely by the playful representation of serious realities. Perhaps the

argument can be suitably modified so as to go through. I do not mean to foreclose that. But clearly more needs to be done to achieve a showing of the truth of (b) or of something like it.

10. Handke, "Brecht..." 90.

11. There is a second clause to this remark: "the world is found to be a copy of the theatre." What Handke means by this is clearly not the sense suggested by drawing a parallel with Samuel Beckett. As Michael Hays points out, Handke explicitly criticizes Beckett for retaining, but in a form emptied of significance, the representational structure of theater. Hays, "Peter Handke and . . ." 347-348. What Handke does mean appears to be rather than in playing around with contradictions and "new modes of thought" the theater provides an area for investigating modes of thought that *can* take a place "in the solution." See Handke, "Brecht . . ." 90.

12. Two of these, *Offending the Audience and Self-Accusation*, are included in the Roloff translation cited above—ftn #1. Included also is a Note on the *Sprechstücke* ix.

13. Handke, "Brecht..." 90, emphases in original.

14. For an interesting application of this point to abstract painting, see Carolyn Wilde, "Painting, Expression, Abstraction," *Philosophy and the Visual Arts*, ed. A. Harrison (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987) 29-50. For more on these connections themselves, see Charles Taylor, "Acting as Expression," *Intention and Intentionality*, eds. C. Diamond and J. Teichman (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1979) 73-89 and Chapter 15 of Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame UP, 1984) 211 ff.

15. Handke, "Brecht..." 90.

16. Lutterbie criticizes a number of writers for treating the play as a "nonrealistic narrative following an imaginary Kaspar through his tortuous process of language acquisition, ending in his schizophrenic demise, and, in some accounts, death." John H. Lutterbie, "The Reluctant Subject: *Kaspar* and the Frame of Representation," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 4.1 (1989): 53. Lutterbie explains that some segments of the play cannot accurately be described as narratives because, in them, Kaspar cannot accurately be described as "a coherent agent pursuing a[n] . . . action." (64) Lutterbie is surely right that if Kaspar is no agent of action then there is no story. His explanation of Kaspar's lack of agency, however, is weakened considerably by its reliance on a Lacanian theory of the relation between agency and action. See Noel Carroll, "Address to the Heathen," [an extended review of the Lacanian resources in Stephen Heath's *Questions of Cinema*] *October* 23 (Winter, 1982): 89-163.

17. This may not seem puzzling to those familiar with the theater of Pirandello, Ionesco, and Beckett. But I believe that each of these cheats, so to speak, and actually relies a great deal more on the representation of action and story than Handke aspires to do. For example, Paolucci correctly describes the events in Pirandello's *Six Characters*. . . as involving the "creation of *identity* onstage." This amounts, as Paolucci describes it, to the creation of stories that explain the origin and engagement of certain intentions and dispositions to act. Anne Paolucci, "Pirandello and the Writing Stage of the Absurd," *Modern Drama* 23.2 (1980): 104. Hays makes a good case for the claim that "Beckett's attempted subversion of theatrical conventions . . . only *seems* to parallel Handke's" because Beckett's accomplishment still "in no way denies the referentiality of linguistic and dramatic activity as such." Michael Hays, "Peter Handke and . . ." 347-348.

18. Here's how the various scenes correspond to the numbered divisions:

Scene 1 = I-XV, Scene 2 = XVI-XVIII, Scene 3 = XIX-XXV, Scene 4 = XXVI-XXVII, Scene 5 = XXVIII-XXXII, the sixteen short "blackouts" = XXXIII-LVII, Scene 6 = LVIII, the Intermission = LIX, Scene 7 = LX-LXIV, and Scene 8 = LXV.

19. This is actually specified in the text, (K65).

20. He is reduced to uttering vowel sounds, then consonants; finally he merely makes noises with his feet and hands. During this reduction, the prompters issue one-word orders—"Order. Put. Lie. Sit. Put. Order. Lie. Sit. Lie. Put. Order. Sit." (K74)

21. It is easy to be reminded of Descartes here—as if Kaspar were saying, "I now speak in sentences, therefore I am."

22. In the "Author's Preface," (TLP, page 3).

23. It may be worth noting, however, that this move is *not* made explicit at the outset of the text. It is only when he is making the connection between pictures and propositions—in the 4s—that Wittgenstein writes: "A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world. They are all constructed according to a common logical pattern" (TLP, 4.014).

24. Wittgenstein's German here has "denken."

25. This due largely to the efforts of Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik in their extraordinary book, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

26. Kant's discussion of this distinction, and of the need for a "unity of consciousness" as a kind of linchpin to hold the categories of the understanding together, takes place at B 131-138 in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Company, 1963).

27. The following argument is based on the opening 45 sections of the *Philosophical Investigations*. See especially sections 28-35 and then 45.

28. I am following out here some of the implications of Peter Brooks' discussion in Chapter I of his *Reading for the Plot* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1984). See especially his discussion of Ricoeur on 13-14.

29. One useful place in which this line of argument appears is Andrew Harrison, "Dimensions of Meaning," *Philosophy and the Visual Arts*, ed. A. Harrison (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987) 51-76. Also see Peter Winch, *Trying to Make Sense* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987), especially Chapters 3 and 6.

30. At XXVII, when Kaspar asserts a nearly perfectly cartesian, "I am the one I am." A reading of Lutterbie's analysis of the play that focused on dramaturgical issues might suggest at least three such disrupted recognition scenes (at XXVII, LVIII, and near the end of LXII). Lutterbie, "The Reluctant . . ." 60-63.

31. Robert Corrigan once described to me a successful production of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* in which, prior to each performance, the cast determined the order of the play's twenty-nine scenes for that performance by drawing numbered slips from a hat. I take this to be evidence that, whatever else might link the scenes, they are neither causally nor intentionally connected. *Woyzeck* is plotless, or can be.

32. For reasons that appear to be unrelated to Handke's, Beckett has explored ways of disrupting and resisting plotting—even while doing it—precisely by adopting principles of *musical* rather than dramatic organization. See the later stages of S. E. Gontarski's "The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett's Art," *Modern Fiction Studies* 29.1 (1983): 5-23.

33. See, in particular, Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* (New York: Oxford UP, 1979), especially his discussion of C. L. Stevenson's "emotivist" theory of ethics in Part Three, 247-292. Also see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, especially Chapters 1, 2, and 5. More recently Cora Diamond has gone over this area in her "Losing Your Concepts," *Ethics* 98.2 (1988): 255-277. The second section of Diamond's essay provides some interesting documentation of the more general phenomena of which the present case—being prevented from articulation by philosophical theory—is but a part (see 256-259).

34. See, for example, his discussion of rule-following and intention in sections 204-217 of the *Philosophical Investigations*. See also this point discussed by Henry MacDonald, "Crossroads of Criticism: Wittgenstein, Derrida, and Ostensive Definition," *The Philosophical Forum* 21.3 (1990): 261-276 (especially 271-274).

35. Consider: I say to her, "Well done." You ask, "What did you intend by that remark?" How might I answer? "To praise her," "To let her know that I was aware of what she had done," "To

'name' a particular action." Surely the former answers do not reduce to the last one even in the case in which all three answers might be true. Nor are the former completely dependent upon my successfully naming her action as "generous": I may succeed in praising her even if her action is more accurately named "unselfish" than it is named "generous."

36. Karl Marx, 'Estranged Labour,' in "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. R. C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972) 56-67. The German translated as "estrangement" is "Entfremdung."

37. See, for example, Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, Part One, Chapter IV, 65-85; and note especially the language on p. 84.

38. Beginning, of course, with Marx. See especially the discussion of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* in *The Marx-Engels Reader* 86-103.

39. An early version of this paper, entitled "*Kaspar*, Handke, and Wittgenstein," was presented at the Conference on New Languages for the Stage at Lawrence, Kansas in October, 1988. I am grateful to my colleagues in the Philosophy Department at Kansas State University for their valuable criticism of a version of this piece presented in the Spring of 1990.



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